A Fawcett Publication

KEN MAYNARD WESTERN

NO. 8

10¢

IN THIS ISSUE:

THE MIGHTY MOUNTAIN MENACE!

ATWTCEF

can you unscramble these letters to find the name of the famous company that publishes the thrilling action comic magazines displayed below! *(ANSWER AT BOTTOM OF THE PAGE)*

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KEN MAYNARD and THE MIGHTY MOUNTAIN MENACE!

CHAPTER ONE
GEOLOGICAL HORROR

WHEN MIGHTY NATURE LETS LOOSE WITH EVERYTHING SHE HAS, LET MAN BEWARE! WANDERING THROUGH THE WEST IN SEARCH OF HIGH ADVENTURE, KEN MAYNARD HITS THE JACKPOT WHEN THE STRANGEST GEOLOGICAL PHENOMENON OF HISTORY TAKES PLACE BEFORE HIS UNBELIEVING EYES! UTTERLY FANTASTIC IS THE HORROR THAT STRIKES FOR MILES AROUND, AND THE GREAT WESTERN HERO FACES HIS GRIMMEST BATTLE AGAINST SUDDEN DEATH!

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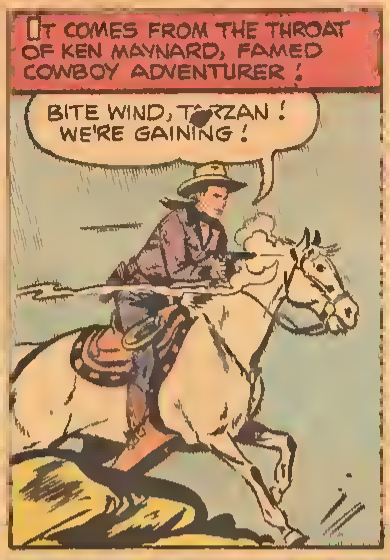
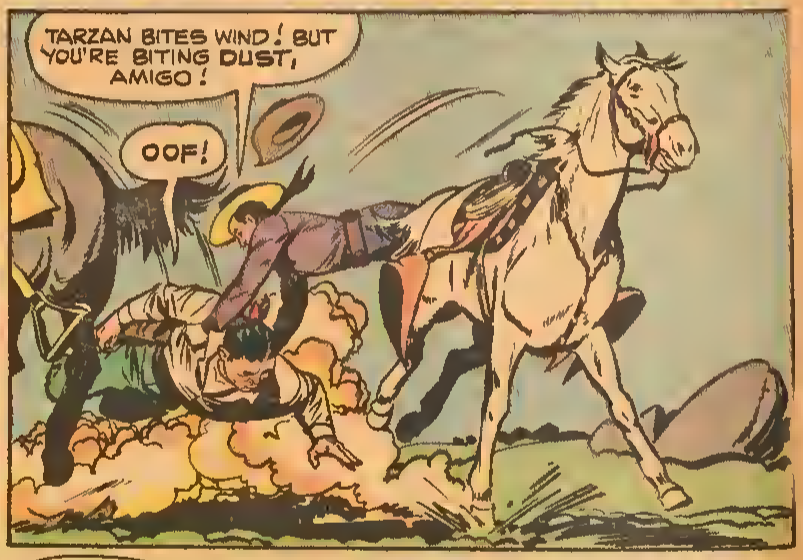
MANY TIMES THROUGH THE SILENT HUSH OF THE WESTERN AIR, THIS THRILLING CRY IS HEARD!
BITE WIND, TARZAN!
CLOPPETY CLOP CLOP!


IT COMES FROM THE THROAT OF KEN MAYNARD, FAMED COWBOY ADVENTURER!
BITE WIND, TARZAN! WE'RE GAINING!

AND IT BRINGS PANIC TO THE HEARTS OF ALL BADMEN, NO MATTER HOW FEARLESS AND BOLD!
YIPES! HE GOT MY GUN!
BANG! BANG!

IT IS A LONG TRAIL KEN MAYNARD HAS RIDDEN IN PURSUIT OF A NOTORIOUS BADMAN!
WANTED!
POLECAT POLTON

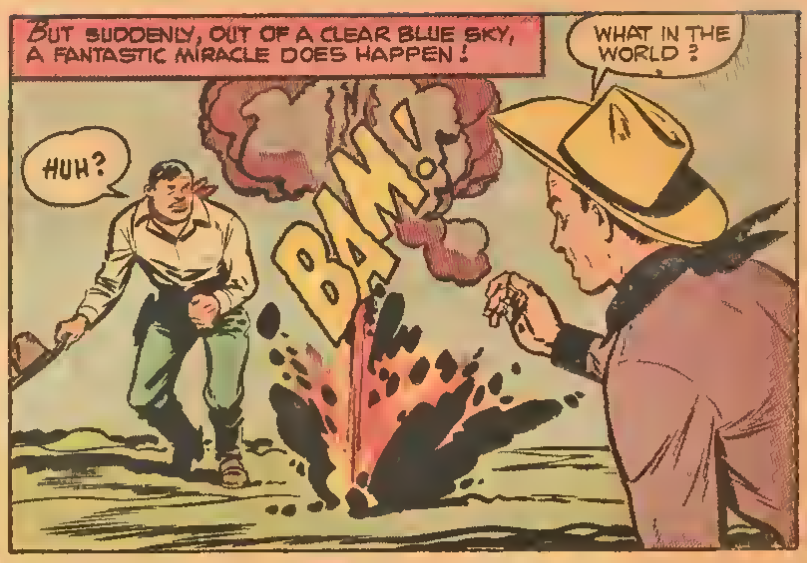

TARZAN BITES WIND! BUT YOU'RE BITING DUST, AMIGO!
OOF!

I'VE STILL GOT FIGHT LEFT IN ME, YUH MAVERICK!
BIFF!

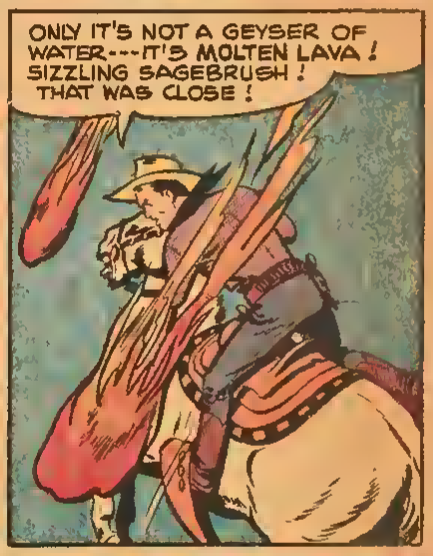
HAVE YOU, PARD?
WHAM!

HOW MUCH?
GHAA!
CRACK!

S-STOP! I'VE GOT ENOUGH! I'M LICKED! ONLY A MIRACLE COULD SAVE ME NOW, AND I DON'T BELIEVE IN MIRACLES!

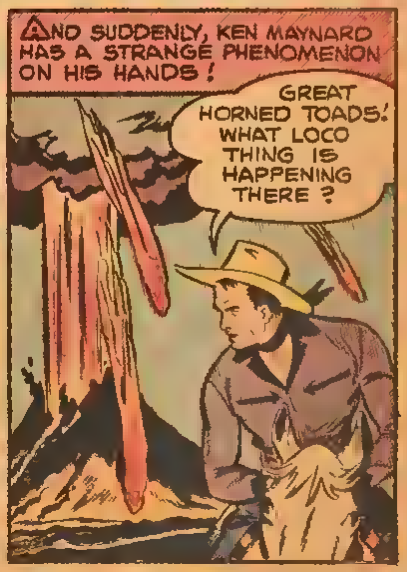

BUT SUDDENLY, OUT OF A CLEAR BLUE SKY, A FANTASTIC MIRACLE DOES HAPPEN!
WHAT IN THE WORLD?
HUH?
BAM!

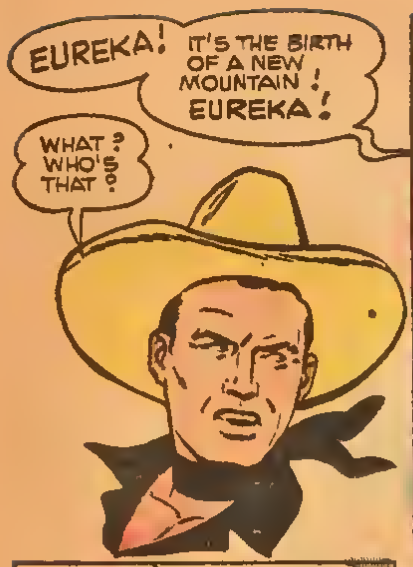
A GEYSER SUDDENLY FORMED HERE OUT OF BARE GROUND!

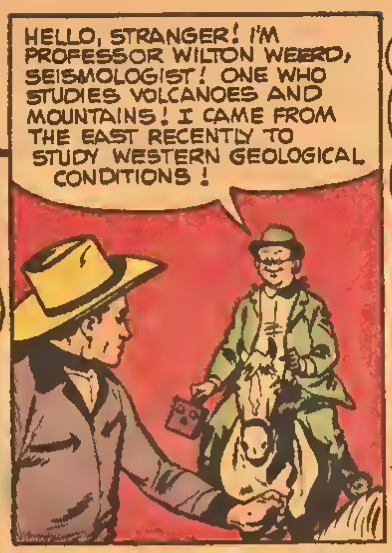

ONLY IT'S NOT A GEYSER OF WATER---IT'S MOLTEN LAVA! SIZZLING SAGEBRUSH! THAT WAS CLOSE!

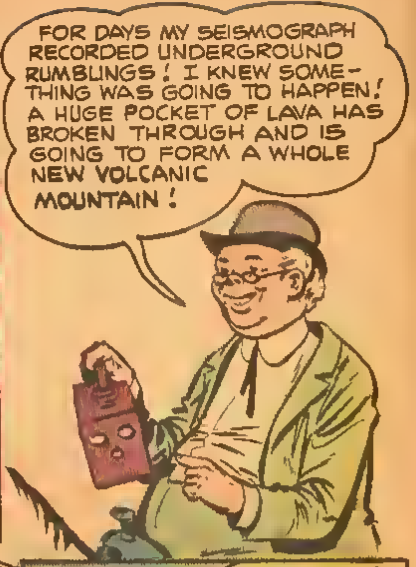
AWAY, TARZAN! IF THAT STUFF HITS US, IT'LL BURN US TO CINDERS!

POLECAT POLTON ALSO ESCAPES IN TIME! HE HAS HAD HIS MIRACLE!
I DUNNO WHAT LET LOOSE BACK THERE! ALL I KNOW IS THAT IT LET ME ESCAPE! WHAT A BREAK!


AND SUDDENLY, KEN MAYNARD HAS A STRANGE PHENOMENON ON HIS HANDS!
GREAT HORNED TOADS! WHAT LOCO THING IS HAPPENING THERE?


EUREKA! IT'S THE BIRTH OF A NEW MOUNTAIN! EUREKA!
WHAT? WHO'S THAT?

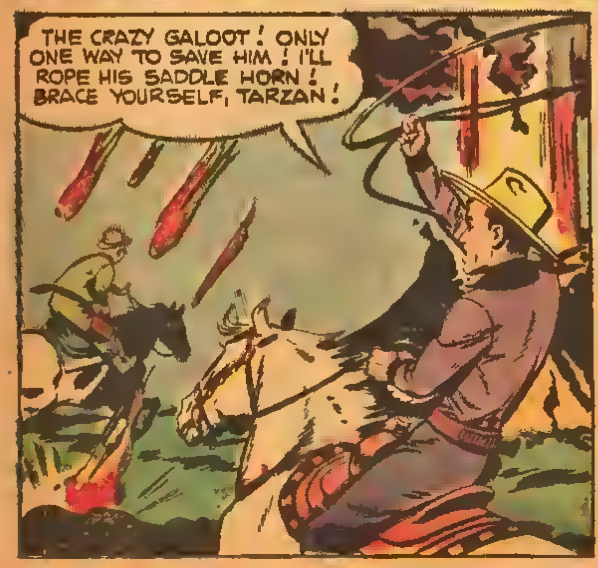

HELLO, STRANGER! I'M PROFESSOR WILTON WEEBD, SEISMOLOGIST! ONE WHO STUDIES VOLCANOES AND MOUNTAINS! I CAME FROM THE EAST RECENTLY TO STUDY WESTERN GEOLOGICAL CONDITIONS!


FOR DAYS MY SEISMOGRAPH RECORDED UNDERGROUND RUMBLINGS! I KNEW SOMETHING WAS GOING TO HAPPEN! A HUGE POCKET OF LAVA HAS BROKEN THROUGH AND IS GOING TO FORM A WHOLE NEW VOLCANIC MOUNTAIN!

YOU MEAN IT'S GOING TO KEEP GROWING INTO A BIG MOUNTAIN?
PRECISELY! OH, THIS IS SIMPLY SENSATIONAL! THIS IS THE GREATEST SCIENTIFIC EVENT OF THE CENTURY! AND I'M HERE TO WITNESS IT WITH MY OWN EYES! EUREKA!

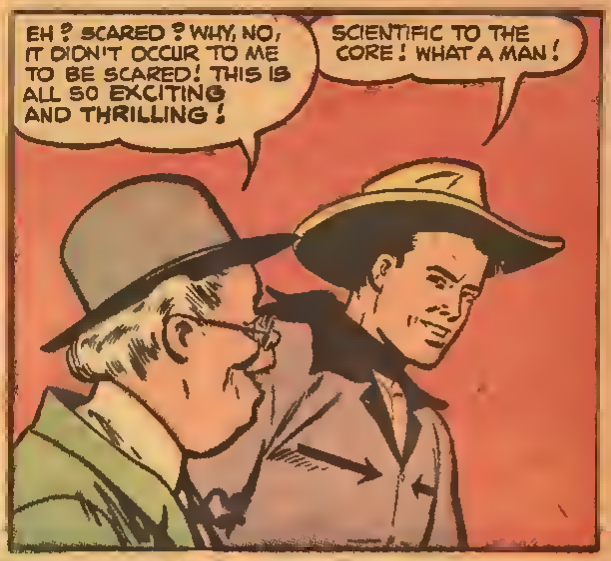
I MUST GET CLOSER AND WATCH THIS AMAZING MOUNTAIN BEING BORN!
STOP, PROFESSOR! DON'T GO ANY CLOSER! IT'S DANGEROUS!

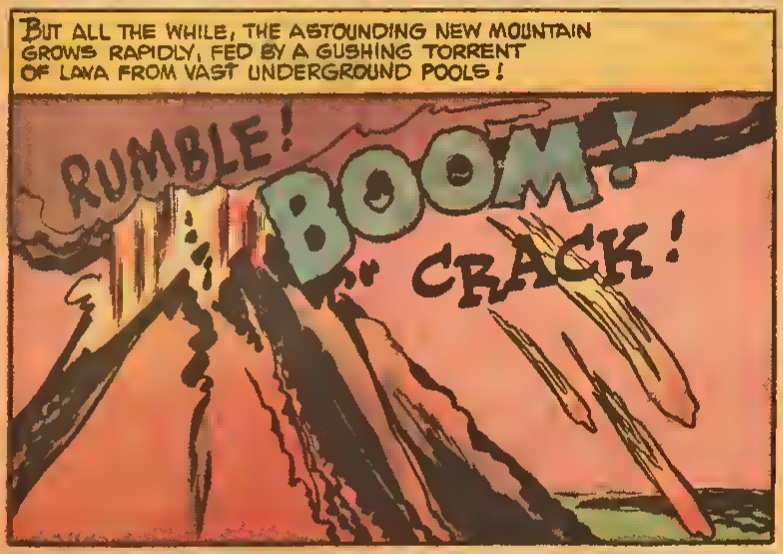
DANGEROUS? PAH!
LOOK OUT! MOLTEN LAVA IS COMING DOWN AT YOU!

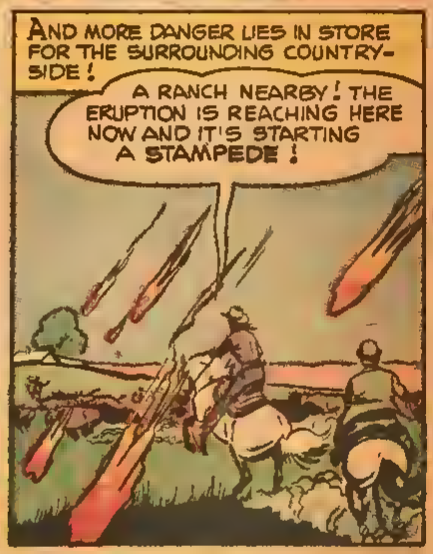

THE CRAZY GALOOT! ONLY ONE WAY TO SAVE HIM! I'LL ROPE HIS SADDLE HORN! BRACE YOURSELF, TARZAN!

STOPPED THEM JUST IN TIME!
DEAR ME! I DO BELIEVE THERE WAS A BIT OF DANGER!

THE ERUPTION IS GETTING BIGGER ALL THE TIME! WE'VE GOT TO KEEP RIDING OUT OF RANGE! AREN'T YOU SCARED, PROFESSOR?


EH? SCARED? WHY, NO, IT DIDN'T OCCUR TO ME TO BE SCARED! THIS IS ALL SO EXCITING AND THRILLING!
SCIENTIFIC TO THE CORE! WHAT A MAN!


BUT ALL THE WHILE, THE ASTOUNDING NEW MOUNTAIN GROWS RAPIDLY, FED BY A GUSHING TORRENT OF LAVA FROM VAST UNDERGROUND POOLS!
RUMBLE!
BOOM!
CRACK!


AND MORE DANGER LIES IN STORE FOR THE SURROUNDING COUNTRY-SIDE!
A RANCH NEARBY! THE ERUPTION IS REACHING HERE NOW AND IT'S STARTING A STAMPEDE!

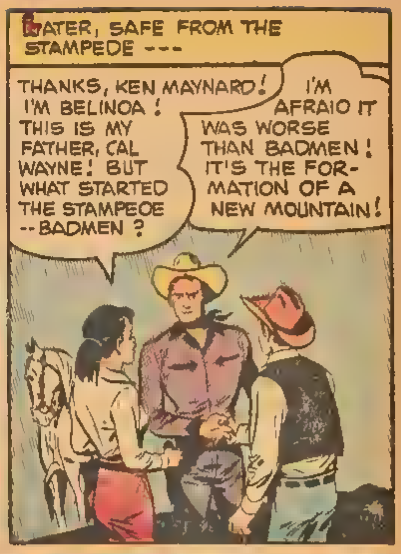
STAMPEDE! LOOK OUT, DAD!

OUR HORSES RAN AWAY! WE'LL HAVE TO RUN FOR IT!
WE HAVEN'T GOT A CHANCE!
BITE WIND TARZAN!

HANG ON, BOTH OF YOU!
KEN MAYNARD! THANK HEAVEN!

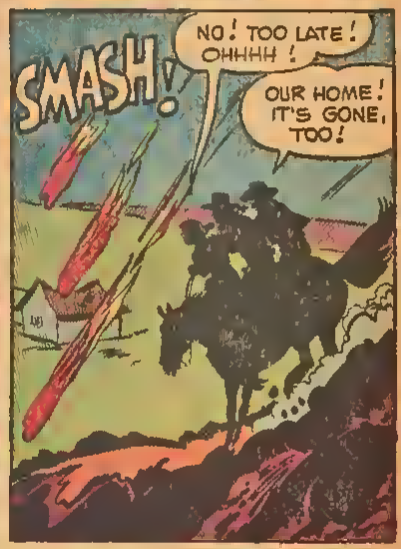
BUT NO HORSE CAN CARRY THE WEIGHT OF THREE PEOPLE AHEAD OF A THUNDERING STAMPEDE ! WE'RE ALL DOOMED !
MAM, I HATE TO CORRECT A LADY, BUT ---

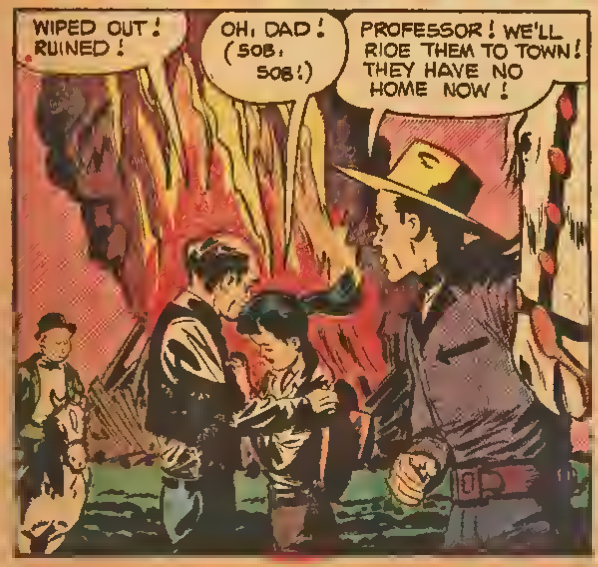
---TARZAN CAN ! YOU SEE, MAM, YOU WERE SPEAKING OF ORDINARY HORSES !


LATER, SAFE FROM THE STAMPEDE ---
THANKS, KEN MAYNARD ! I'M BELINDA ! THIS IS MY FATHER, CAL WAYNE ! BUT WHAT STARTED THE STAMPEDE -- BADMEN ?
I'M AFRAID IT WAS WORSE THAN BADMEN ! IT'S THE FORMATION OF A NEW MOUNTAIN !

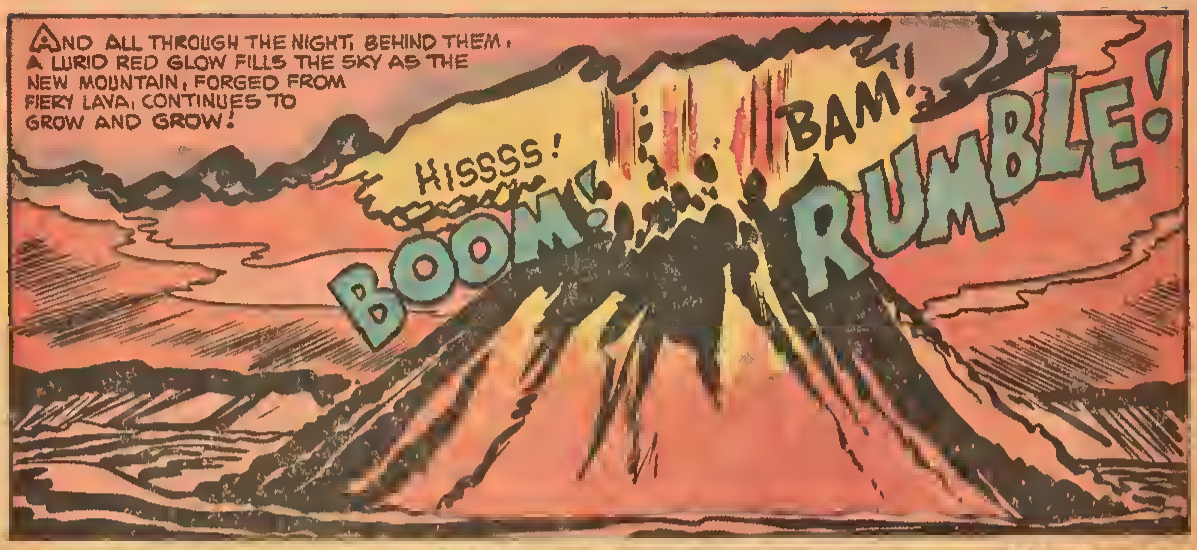
SEE ? IT'S ALREADY HUNDREDS OF FEET HIGH AND STILL GROWING ! IT'S GOING TO ERUPT ALL OVER THE RANCH !
HOW HORRIBLE ! THEN WE'RE RUINED !

YOUR CATTLE ALL STAMPEDED OFF INTO THE BADLANDS ! BUT MAYBE YOU CAN SAVE THINGS FROM YOUR HOUSE !

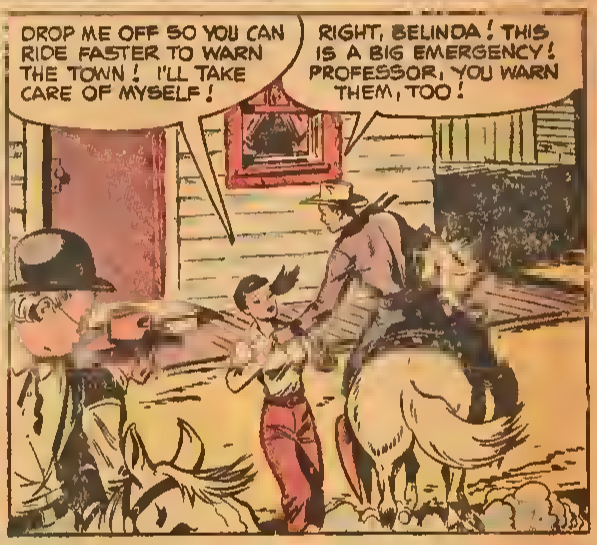

SMASH !
NO ! TOO LATE ! OHHHH !
OUR HOME ! IT'S GONE, TOO !

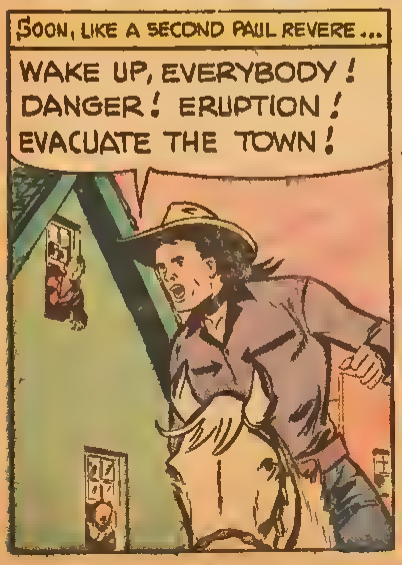

WIPED OUT ! RUINED !
OH, DAD ! (SOB, SOB !)
PROFESSOR ! WE'LL RIDE THEM TO TOWN ! THEY HAVE NO HOME NOW !

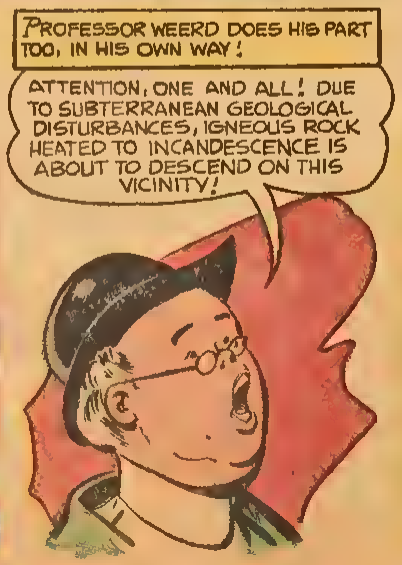
WE'LL HAVE TO RIDE ALL NIGHT TO KEEP AHEAD OF THE ERUPTION AS IT SPREADS FURTHER AND FURTHER !


AND ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT, BEHIND THEM, A LURID RED GLOW FILLS THE SKY AS THE NEW MOUNTAIN, FORGED FROM FIERY LAVA, CONTINUES TO GROW AND GROW!
HISSSS!
BOOM!
BAM!
RUMBLE!

AT DAWN, KEN MAYNARD RIDES HIS PARTY TO THE NEAREST TOWN OF LONGHORN JUNCTION!
THE ERUPTION IS GOING TO HIT TOWN SOON, TOO! WE'VE GOT TO WARN THEM!


DROP ME OFF SO YOU CAN RIDE FASTER TO WARN THE TOWN! I'LL TAKE CARE OF MYSELF!
RIGHT, BELINDA! THIS IS A BIG EMERGENCY! PROFESSOR, YOU WARN THEM, TOO!


SOON, LIKE A SECOND PAUL REVERE...
WAKE UP, EVERYBODY! DANGER! ERUPTION! EVACUATE THE TOWN!


PROFESSOR WEERD DOES HIS PART TOO, IN HIS OWN WAY!
ATTENTION, ONE AND ALL! DUE TO SUBTERRANEAN GEOLOGICAL DISTURBANCES, IGNEOUS ROCK HEATED TO INCANDESCENCE IS ABOUT TO DESCEND ON THIS VICINITY!

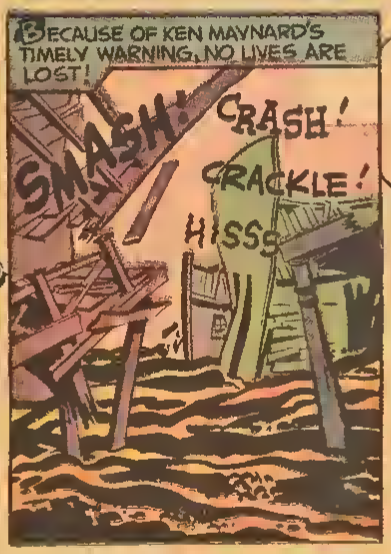
WHO WAS THAT, PAW?
DUNNO, MAW! SOME LOCO MULE SELLING HORSE LINIMENT, I THINK! OH WELL, IT CAN'T BE IMPORTANT!

DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? A VOLCANO ERUPTION IS COMING!
YIPE! WHY DON'T YOU SAY SO IN THE FIRST PLACE! HELP!!

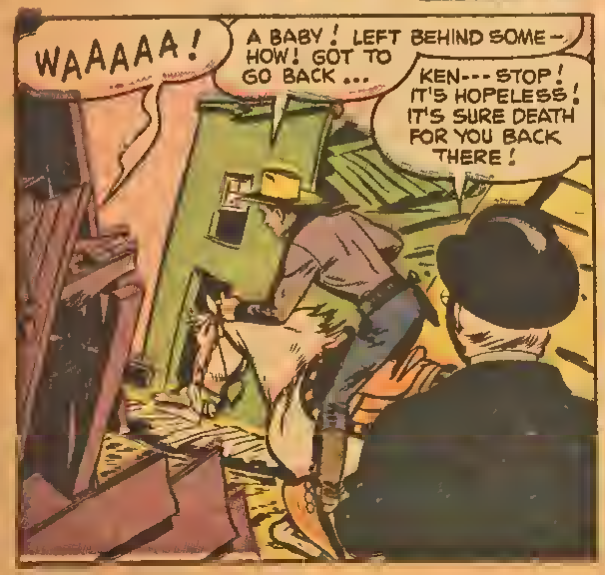
ERUPTION COMING! LEAVE TOWN!
WHAT'S ALL THIS YELLING ABOUT? ARE YOU PLAYING A JOKE?

THERE'S YOUR ANSWER, SHERIFF! THE ERUPTION IS REACHING HERE!
EEEEAAA! HELP! CLEAR OUT THE TOWN!

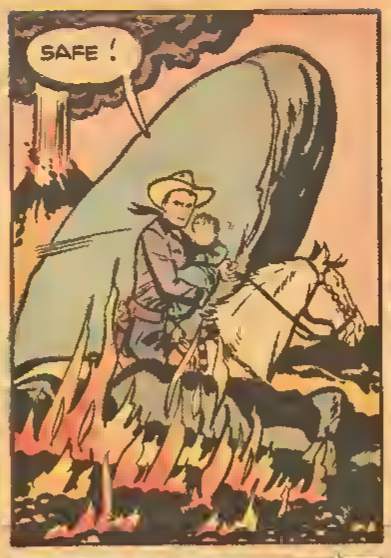
AND SOON, THE DOOMED TOWN IS EVACUATED IN PANIC AND FEAR!
ERUPTION!
FASTER!
HURRY!
EAAA!

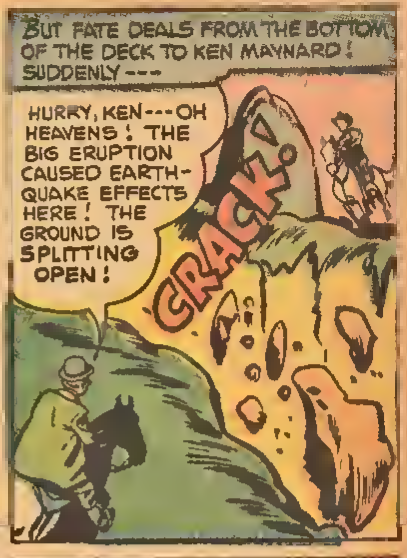

BECAUSE OF KEN MAYNARD'S TIMELY WARNING, NO LIVES ARE LOST!
SMASH!
CRASH!
CRACKLE!
HISSS

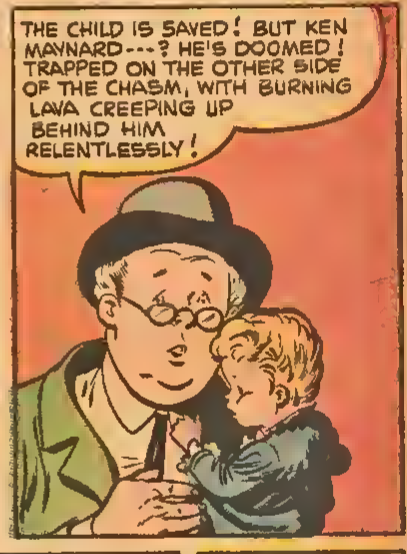
MY WORD! JUST IN TIME! A RIVER OF LAVA IS FLOODING TOWN! LUCKILY, NOT A SOUL IS LEFT BEHIND AND ---EH?
WAAAAA-WAAA!
WHAT'S THAT?

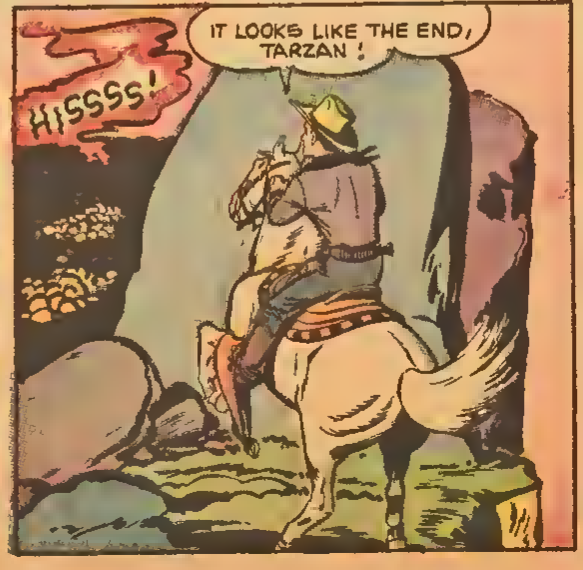

WAAAAA!
A BABY! LEFT BEHIND SOME-HOW! GOT TO GO BACK...
KEN---STOP! IT'S HOPELESS! IT'S SURE DEATH FOR YOU BACK THERE!

BUT THE WESTERN HERO IGNORES DEATH, AND RISKS LIFE FOR THE FORGOTTEN CHILD!
WAAAA!
THE LAVA DIDN'T GET HERE YET! GOT TO WORK FAST!



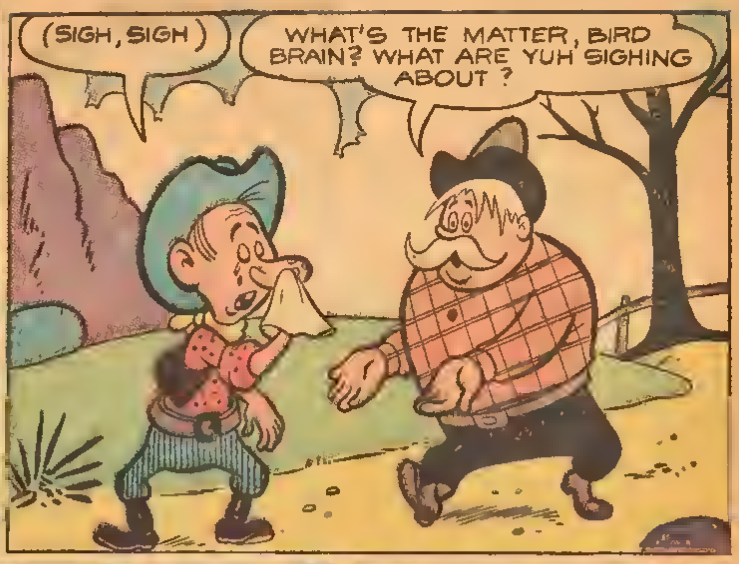






SLOWLY THE BURNING TIDE OF FIERY LAVA CROWDS HIM CLOSER AND CLOSER TO THE EDGE OF THE CHASM! DEATH BEFORE HIM AND DEATH BEHIND HIM! IS IT THE END FOR THE GREAT WESTERN ADVENTURER? READ CHAPTER II OF THE MIGHTY MOUNTAIN MENACE!

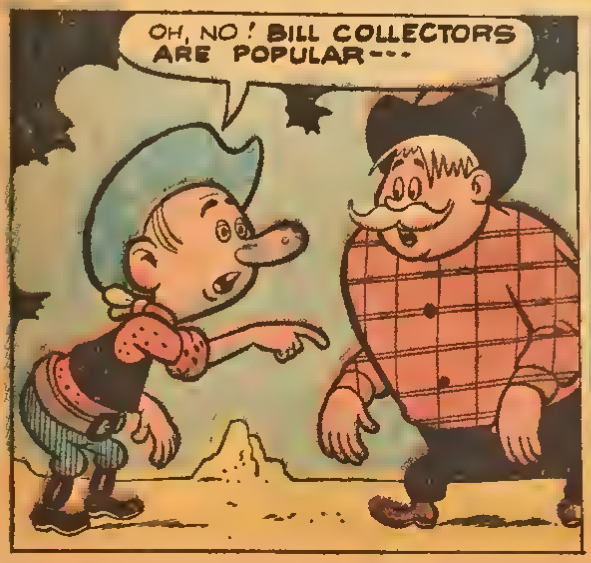
BIRD BRAIN
--POPULARITY CONTEST!

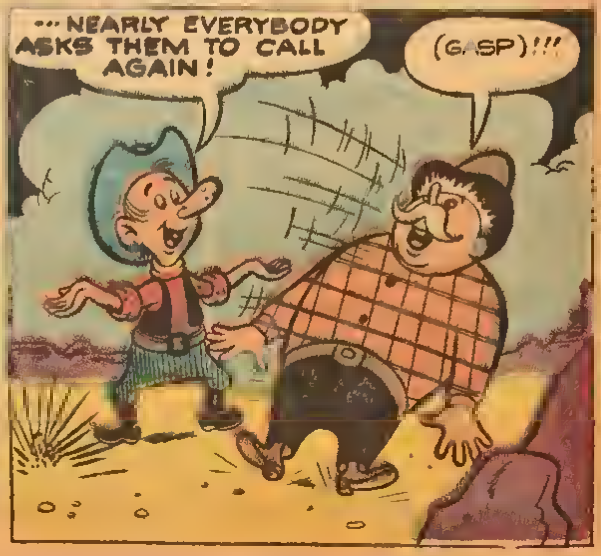

(SIGH, SIGH)
WHAT'S THE MATTER, BIRD BRAIN? WHAT ARE YUH SIGHING ABOUT?

(SIGH) I WASN'T INVITED TO THE BIG PARTY SATURDAY NIGHT! (SIGH) I RECKON I'M NOT POPULAR!

I WISH I WERE A BILL COLLECTOR!
HUH? A BILL COLLECTOR? WHY?

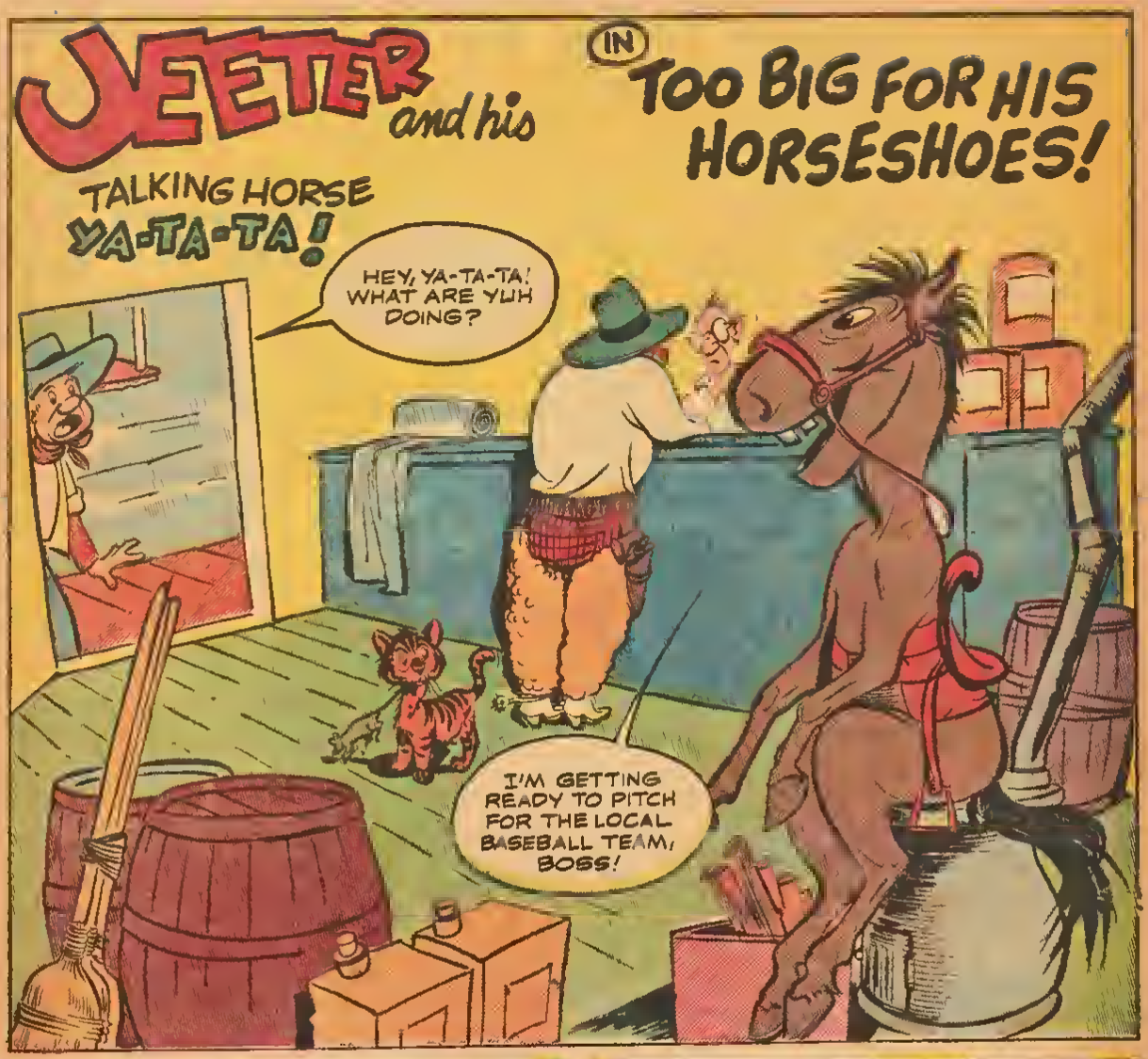
BECAUSE THEN I'D BE POPULAR!
YUH'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG, BIRD BRAIN! BILL COLLECTORS ARE UNPOPULAR!

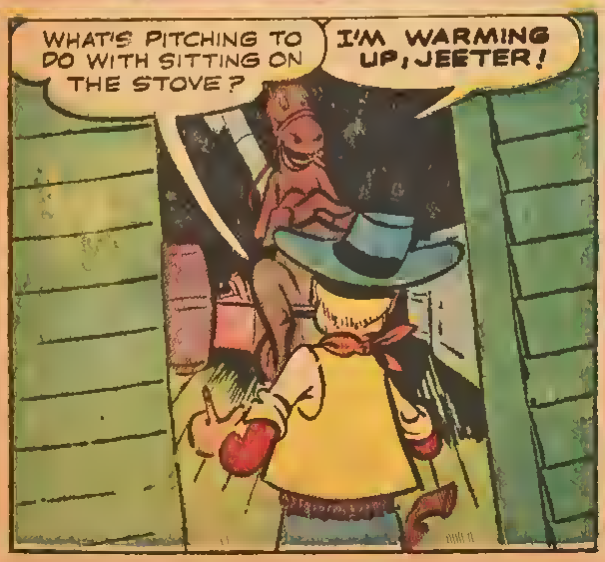

OH, NO! BILL COLLECTORS ARE POPULAR---

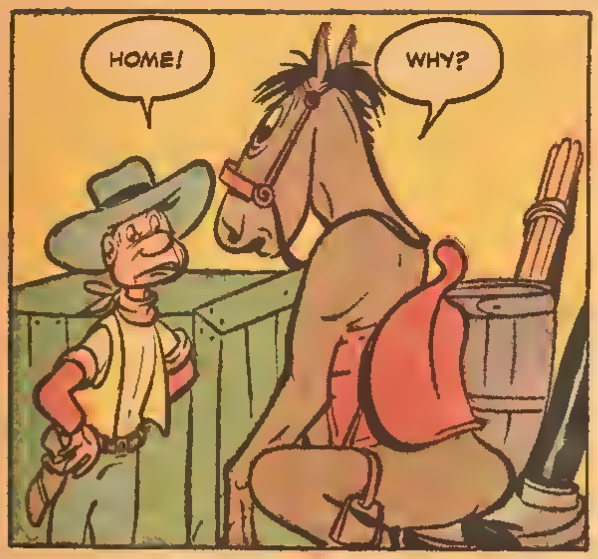

---NEARLY EVERYBODY ASKS THEM TO CALL AGAIN!
(GASP)!!!

JEETER and his TALKING HORSE YA-TA-TA!

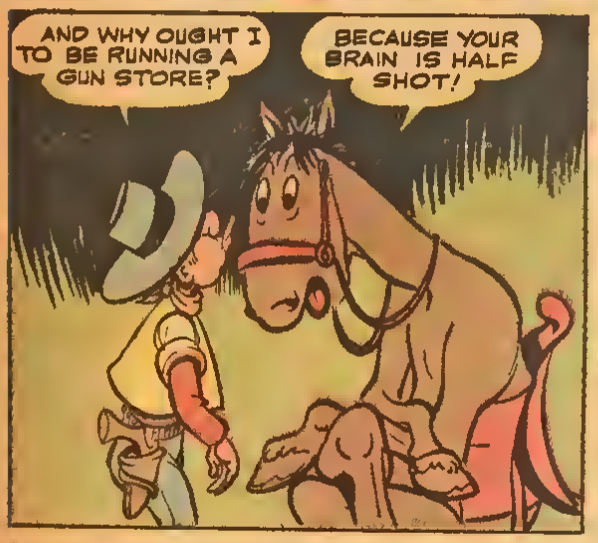
IN TOO BIG FOR HIS HORSESHOES!

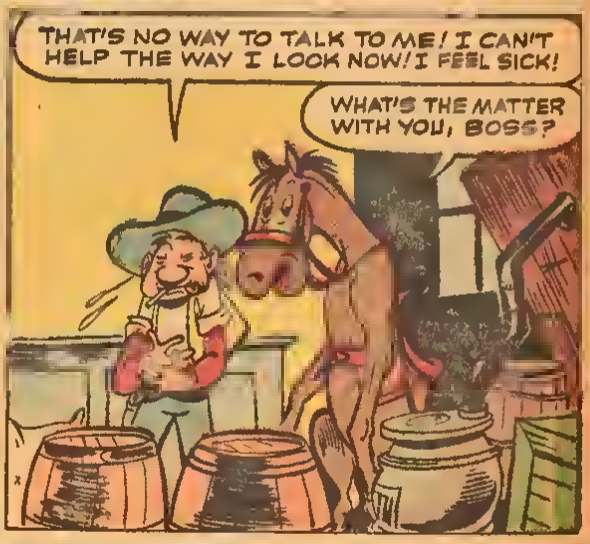


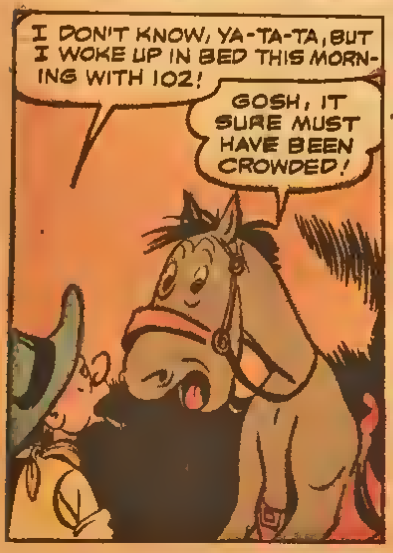


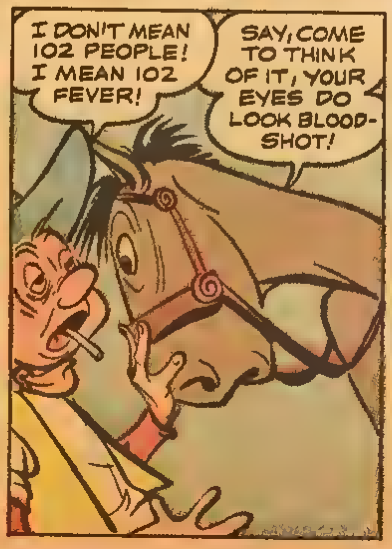

HOME!
WHY?

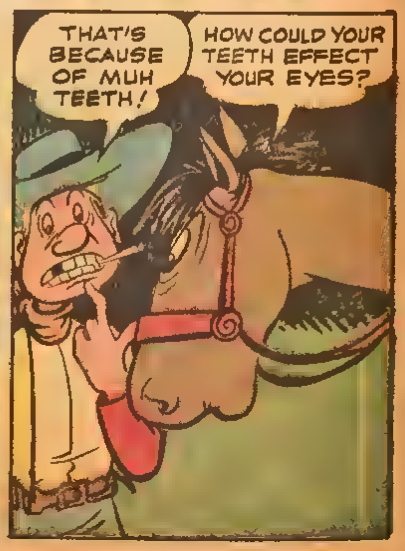
BECAUSE I LIVE THERE, STUPID!
LOOK WHO'S CALLING ME STUPID! WHY, YOU OUGHT TO RUN A GUN STORE!


AND WHY OUGHT I TO BE RUNNING A GUN STORE?
BECAUSE YOUR BRAIN IS HALF SHOT!

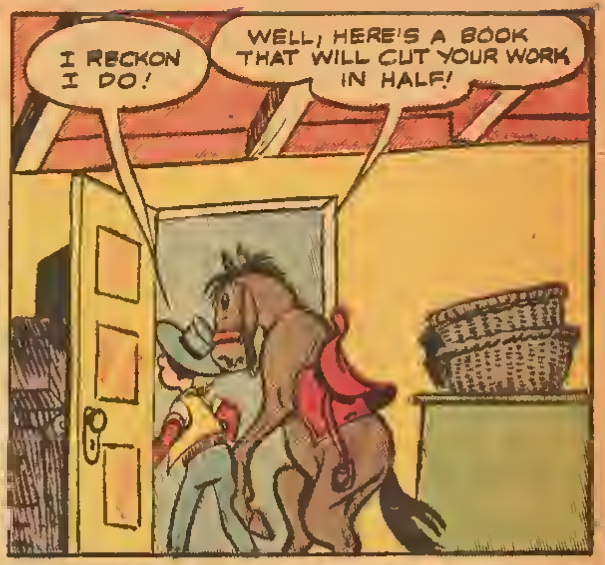

THAT'S NO WAY TO TALK TO ME! I CAN'T HELP THE WAY I LOOK NOW! I FEEL SICK!
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, BOSS?


I DON'T KNOW, YA-TA-TA, BUT I WOKE UP IN BED THIS MORNING WITH 102!
GOSH, IT SURE MUST HAVE BEEN CROWDED!

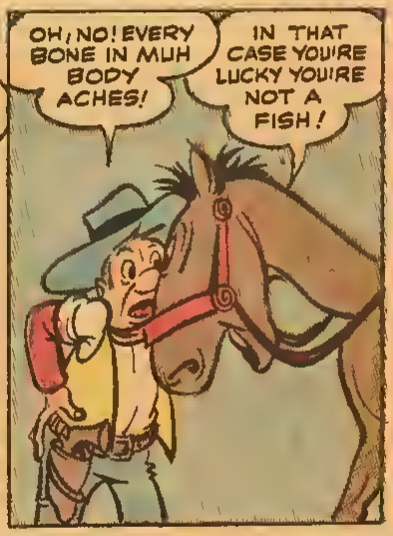

I DON'T MEAN 102 PEOPLE! I MEAN 102 FEVER!
SAY, COME TO THINK OF IT, YOUR EYES DO LOOK BLOODSHOT!

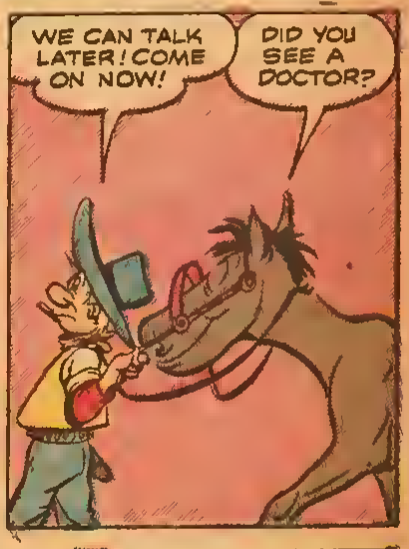

THAT'S BECAUSE OF MUH TEETH!
HOW COULD YOUR TEETH EFFECT YOUR EYES?

I WAS UP ALL NIGHT USING MY EYES TO LOOK FER MY TEETH!
YOU'RE NOT SICK, THEN! YOU'RE JUST TIRED! MAYBE YOU DO TOO MUCH WORK!

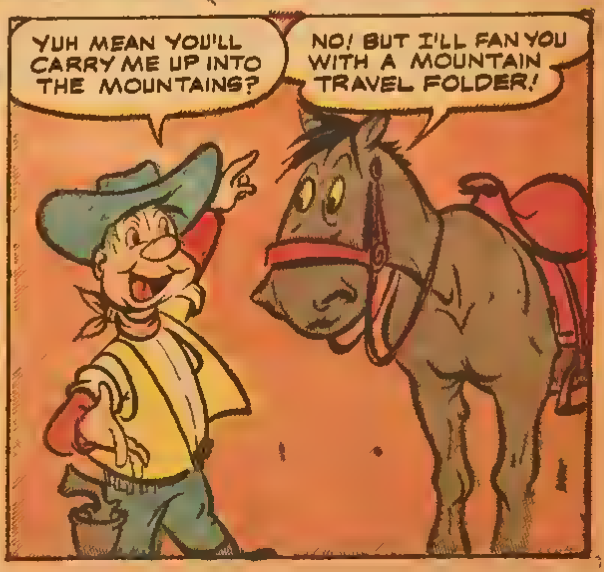

I RECKON I DO!
WELL, HERE'S A BOOK THAT WILL CUT YOUR WORK IN HALF!

IN THAT CASE, I'M GOING TO TAKE TWO COPIES!
JUST AS I THOUGHT! THE ONLY THING WRONG WITH YOU IS THAT YOU'RE LAZY!


OH, NO! EVERY BONE IN MUH BODY ACHES!
IN THAT CASE YOU'RE LUCKY YOU'RE NOT A FISH!

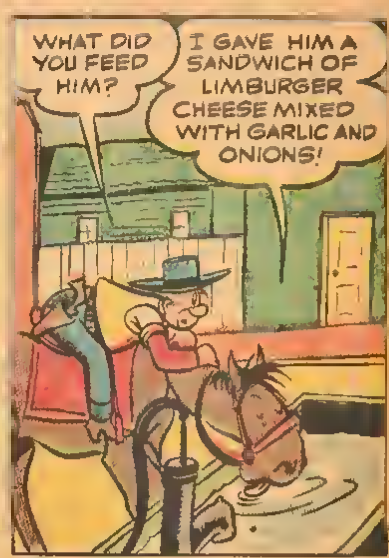

WE CAN TALK LATER! COME ON NOW!
DID YOU SEE A DOCTOR?

YES, HE SAID I NEEDED MOUNTAIN AIR!
I CAN FIX THAT!

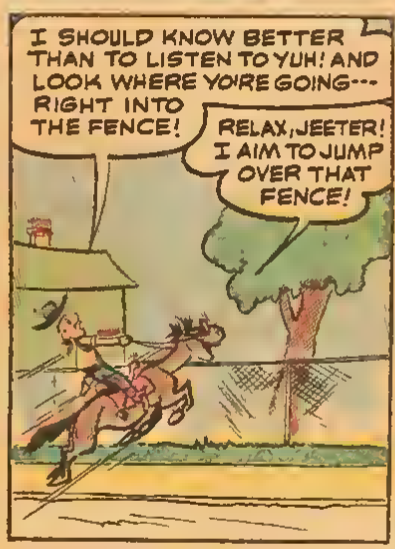

YUH MEAN YOU'LL CARRY ME UP INTO THE MOUNTAINS?
NO! BUT I'LL FAN YOU WITH A MOUNTAIN TRAVEL FOLDER!

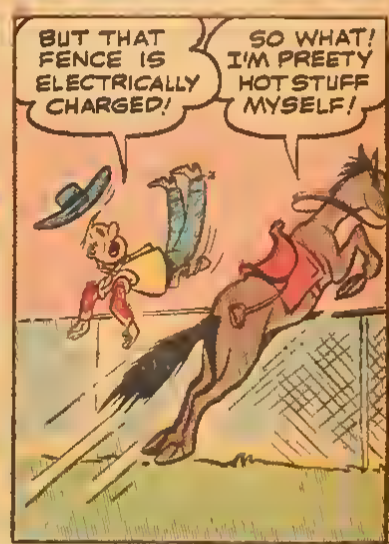
I KNEW I COULDN'T COUNT ON YUH FER ANY HELP!
IF YOU'D LISTEN TO ME, I COULD HELP YOU!

HOW?
BY LETTING ME FIX YOU A MEAL! I MET A COWBOY LAST NIGHT WHO WAS AILING JUST LIKE YOU AND I TOOK CARE OF HIM!


WHAT DID YOU FEED HIM?
I GAVE HIM A SANDWICH OF LIMBURGER CHEESE MIXED WITH GARLIC AND ONIONS!

HOW DID THE COWBOY FEEL THIS MORNING?
I DON'T KNOW! I COULDN'T GET NEAR HIM!


I SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN TO LISTEN TO YUH! AND LOOK WHERE YO'RE GOING--- RIGHT INTO THE FENCE!
RELAX, JEETER! I AIM TO JUMP OVER THAT FENCE!


BUT THAT FENCE IS ELECTRICALLY CHARGED!
SO WHAT! I'M PREETY HOT STUFF MYSELF!

YIPES!!

(GROAN!) WHAT'S SO FUNNY?
S-I-Z-Z-L-E!
SEEING YOU BEING TAKEN DOWN A PEG HAS MADE ME FEEL WELL AGAIN! HA! HA!

KEN MAYNARD and THE MIGHTY MOUNTAIN MENACE!

CHAPTER TWO
GOLD STAMPEDE

KEN MAYNARD FACES HOPELESS ODDS! LAVA HISSES HOTLY BEHIND HIM! AND A YAWNING CHASM STRETCHES BEFORE HIM THAT EVEN MIGHTY TARZAN CANNOT LEAP ACROSS! AND ONLY SECONDS OF LIFE REMAIN!

HISSSS!

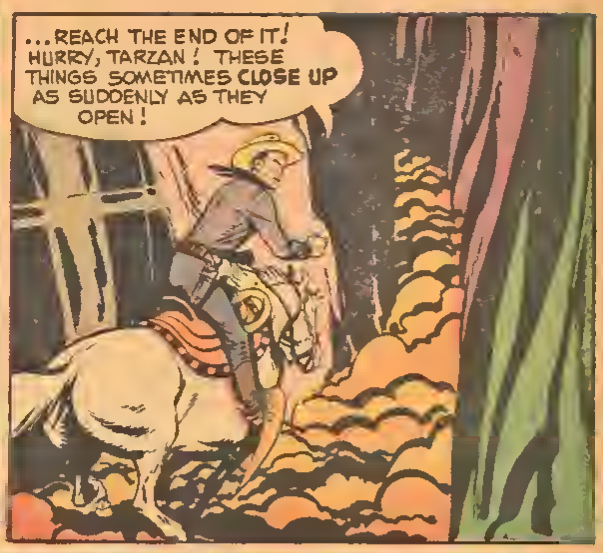
HISSSS!

HISSS!

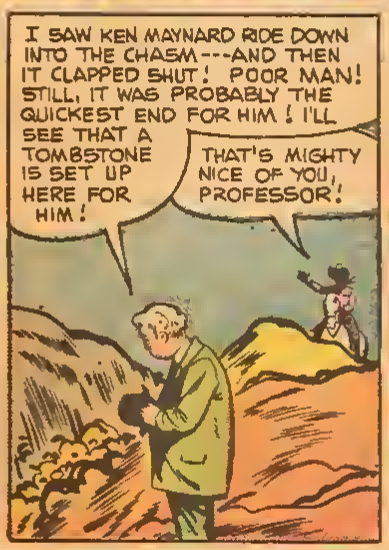
GOODBYE, KEN MAYNARD! IT'S ALL I CAN SAY!

YOU SAVED MY BABY! I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOUR BRAVE DEED! GOOD-BYE....

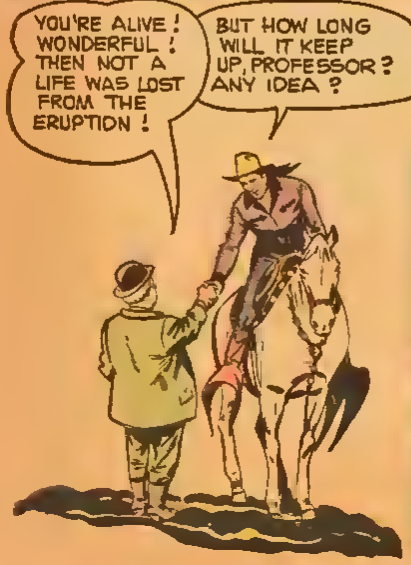
WHEW! WE GOT DOWN WITHOUT BREAKING OUR NECKS! NOW WE CAN RIDE ALONG THE LENGTH OF THE CHASM AND...


...REACH THE END OF IT! HURRY, TARZAN! THESE THINGS SOMETIMES CLOSE UP AS SUDDENLY AS THEY OPEN!

JUST IN TIME!
CLAP!


I SAW KEN MAYNARD RIDE DOWN INTO THE CHASM---AND THEN IT CLAPPED SHUT! POOR MAN! STILL, IT WAS PROBABLY THE QUICKEST END FOR HIM! I'LL SEE THAT A TOMBSTONE IS SET UP HERE FOR HIM!
THAT'S MIGHTY NICE OF YOU, PROFESSOR!

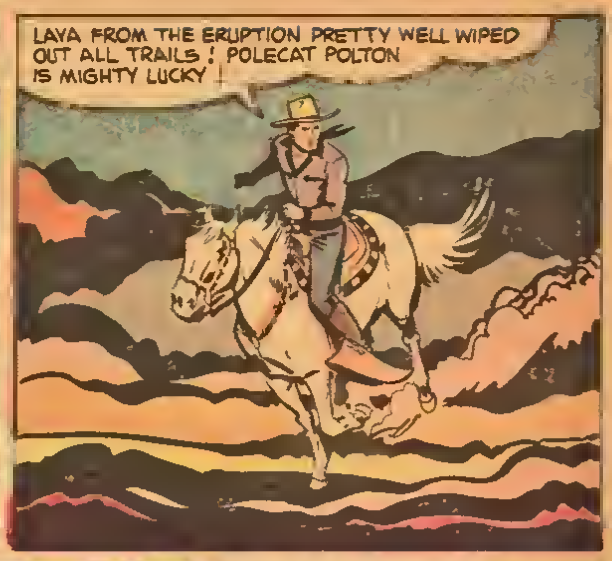
KEN MAYNARD !!!???
BUT--BUT---I'M A SCIENTIST! I DON'T BELIEVE IN GHOSTS!
BUT YOU CAN'T BE ALIVE EITHER!
MAKE UP YOUR MIND, PROFESSOR!

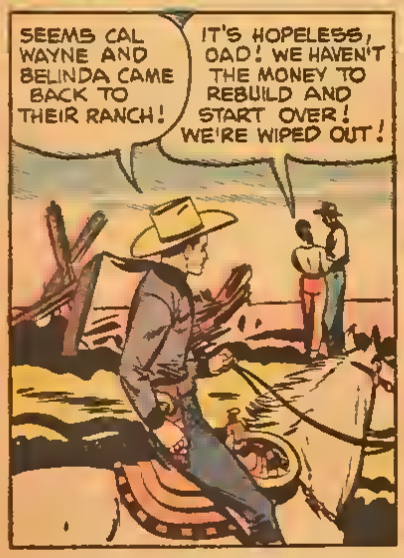

YOU'RE ALIVE! WONDERFUL! THEN NOT A LIFE WAS LOST FROM THE ERUPTION!
BUT HOW LONG WILL IT KEEP UP, PROFESSOR? ANY IDEA?

NOT TOO LONG, FORTUNATELY! LISTEN! THE NOISE FROM THE ERUPTING MOUNTAIN IS SUBSIDING! I THINK IN ANOTHER DAY OR TWO THE NEW MOUNTAIN WILL QUIET DOWN!
RUMBLE!

TRUE TO THE SEISMOLOGIST'S PREDICTION, THE WORST IS OVER AND THE NEW-BORN MOUNTAIN SLOWLY QUIETS DOWN!
RUMBLE!

AND NOW, KEN MAYNARD HAS TIME TO PICK UP THE THREADS OF HIS LIFE AS BEFORE!
POLECAT POLTON! ALMOST FORGOT ABOUT HIM COMPLETELY! WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM? LET'S SEE IF WE CAN PICK UP HIS TRAIL, TARZAN!


LAVA FROM THE ERUPTION PRETTY WELL WIPED OUT ALL TRAILS! POLECAT POLTON IS MIGHTY LUCKY!

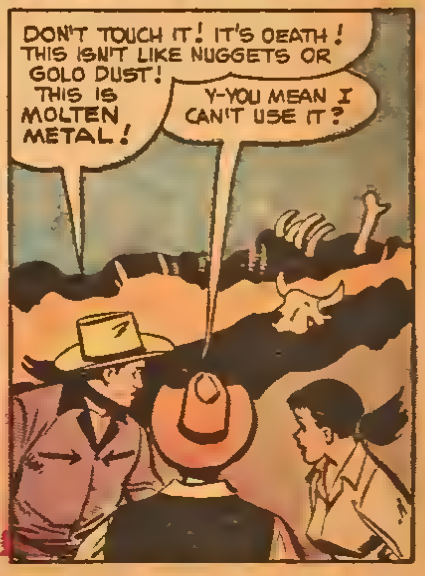

SEEMS CAL WAYNE AND BELINDA CAME BACK TO THEIR RANCH!
IT'S HOPELESS, OAD! WE HAVEN'T THE MONEY TO REBUILD AND START OVER! WE'RE WIPED OUT!

LOOK OUT! THERE'S STILL SOME MOLTEN LAVA HERE AND THERE!
HISSS!

WAIT! THAT LAVA HAS A STRANGE COLOR --- YELLOW! DON'T TELL ME IT'S --?

YES! HOWLING COYOTES! THAT HAPPENS TO BE PURE MOLTEN GOLD! THE ERUPTION THREW UP A HIDDEN VEIN OF GOLD FROM UNDERGROUND!
THE MOST AMAZING EVENT OF ALL!

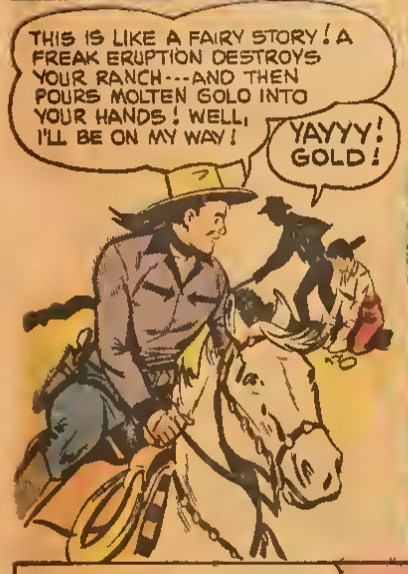
GOLD! GOLD! IT'S MINE! WE'RE SAVED!
STOP, YOU FOOL! YOU CAN'T JUST GRAB IT UP!


DON'T TOUCH IT! IT'S DEATH! THIS ISN'T LIKE NUGGETS OR GOLD DUST! THIS IS MOLTEN METAL!
Y-YOU MEAN I CAN'T USE IT?

SURE YOU CAN! LUCKILY THIS WATER TROUGH WASN'T WRECKED! CARRY IT OVER TO THE MOLTEN GOLD!

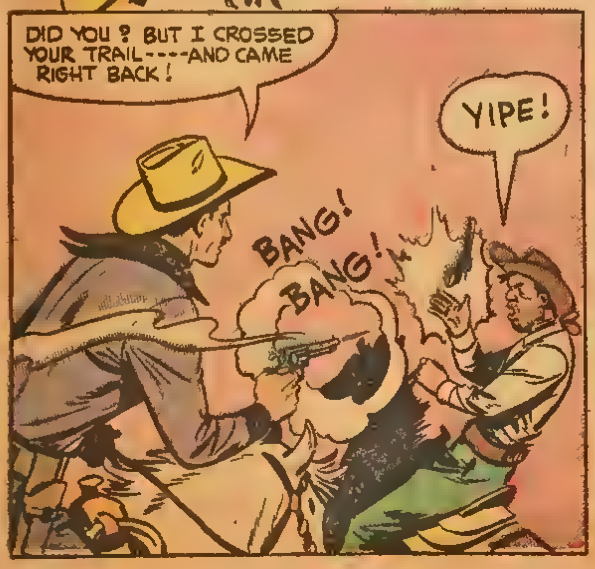
DUMP IT ON! WATER WILL COOL AND HARDEN IT!

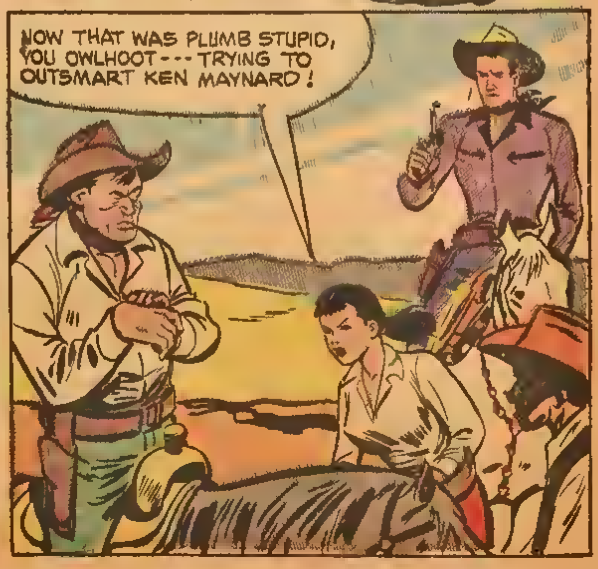
AND LATER---
WE'RE RICH! INSTEAD OF RUINING US, THE ERUPTION POURED A FORTUNE RIGHT IN OUR LAPS! HOW WONDERFUL!
GOLD IN OUR OWN BACK-YARD!


THIS IS LIKE A FAIRY STORY! A FREAK ERUPTION DESTROYS YOUR RANCH---AND THEN POURS MOLTEN GOLD INTO YOUR HANDS! WELL, I'LL BE ON MY WAY!
YAYYY! GOLD!

BUT NEARBY, OTHER EARS PICK UP THE TRIUMPHANT YELL---THOSE OF POLECAT POLTON!
GOLD! YAYYY!
WHAT? DID THAT RANCHER STRIKE IT RICH? WAAL NOW, ISN'T THAT NICE?

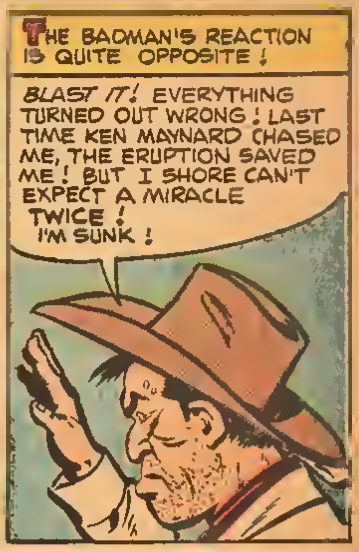
POLECAT POLTON, THE BANDIT!
YEH! HAND OVER THE GOLD! AND I MADE SURE KEN MAYNARD RODE OUT OF SIGHT!


DID YOU? BUT I CROSSED YOUR TRAIL----AND CAME RIGHT BACK!
YIPE!
BANG!
BANG!

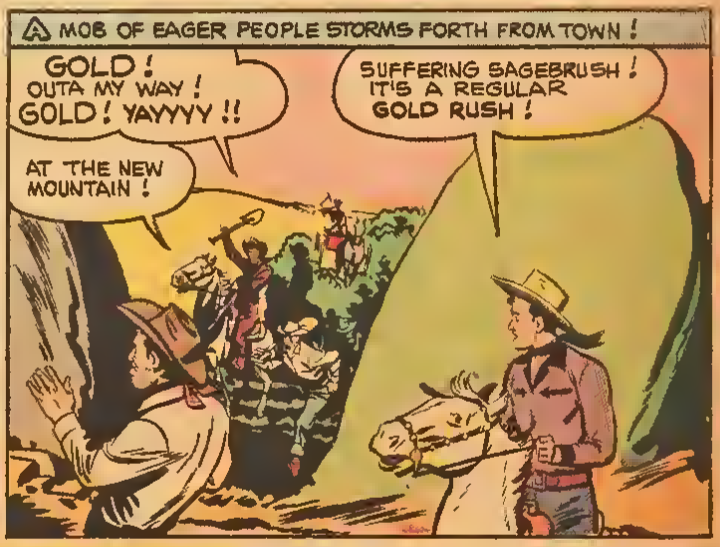

NOW THAT WAS PLUMB STUPID, YOU OWLHOOT---TRYING TO OUTSMART KEN MAYNARD!

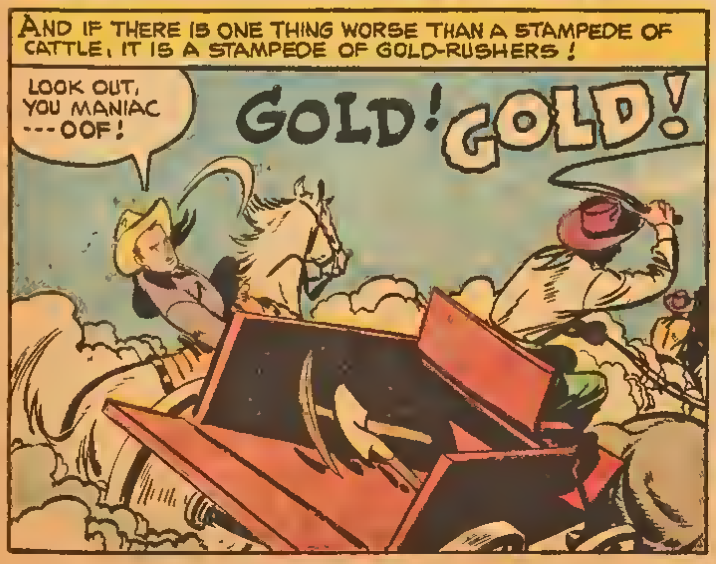
GET GOING, PARD! TO LONGHORN JUNCTION! MAYBE THEIR JAIL WAS PARTLY WRECKED, BUT I'LL HELP REBUILD IT---JUST FOR YOU!

EVERYTHING'S TURNING OUT RIGHT FOR A CHANGE! BELINDA AND HER FATHER FOUND GOLD! AND I'VE GOT MY MAN!


THE BADMAN'S REACTION IS QUITE OPPOSITE!
BLAST IT! EVERYTHING TURNED OUT WRONG! LAST TIME KEN MAYNARD CHASED ME, THE ERUPTION SAVED ME! BUT I SHORE CAN'T EXPECT A MIRACLE TWICE! I'M SUNK!

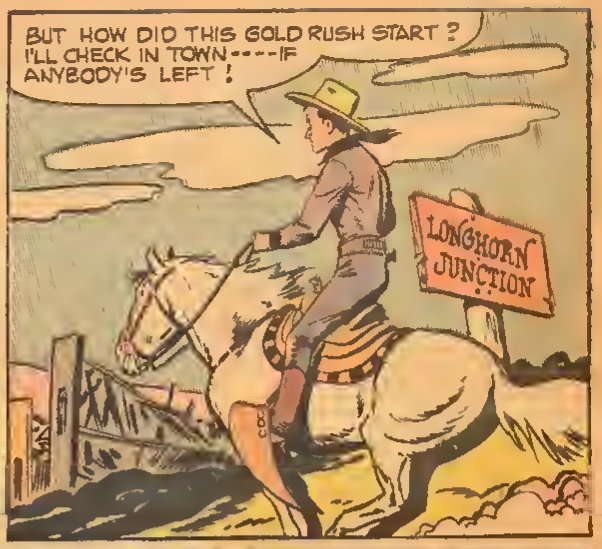
BUT AS THEY NEAR LONGHORN JUNCTION!
GOLD! GOLD!
WHAT'S THAT? SOUNDS LIKE A PACK OF PEOPLE FROM TOWN!

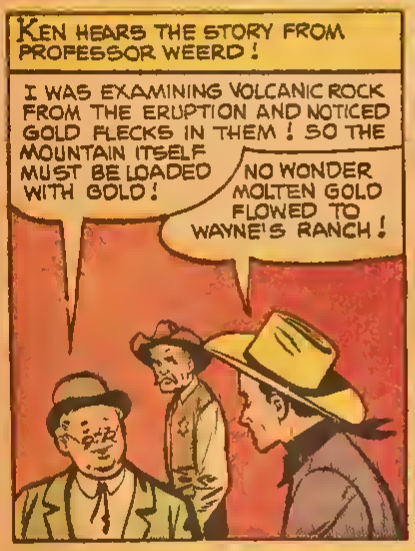

A MOB OF EAGER PEOPLE STORMS FORTH FROM TOWN!
GOLD! OUTA MY WAY! GOLD! YAYYYY!!
SUFFERING SAGEBRUSH! IT'S A REGULAR GOLD RUSH!
AT THE NEW MOUNTAIN!


AND IF THERE IS ONE THING WORSE THAN A STAMPEDE OF CATTLE, IT IS A STAMPEDE OF GOLD-RUSHERS!
LOOK OUT, YOU MANIAC ---OOF!
GOLD! GOLD!

OH, NO! NOT TWICE! NOT A SIGN OF POLECAT POLTON! HE GOT AWAY IN THAT MESS!

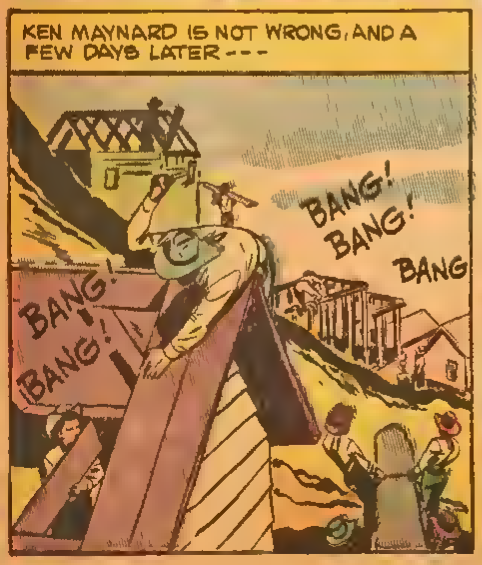
GOSH ALL HEMLOCK! I'M THE LUCKIEST GALOOT ON EARTH, I RECKON! I NOT ONLY GET AWAY FROM KEN MAYNARD, BUT I CAN GO AFTER THE GOLD NOW!

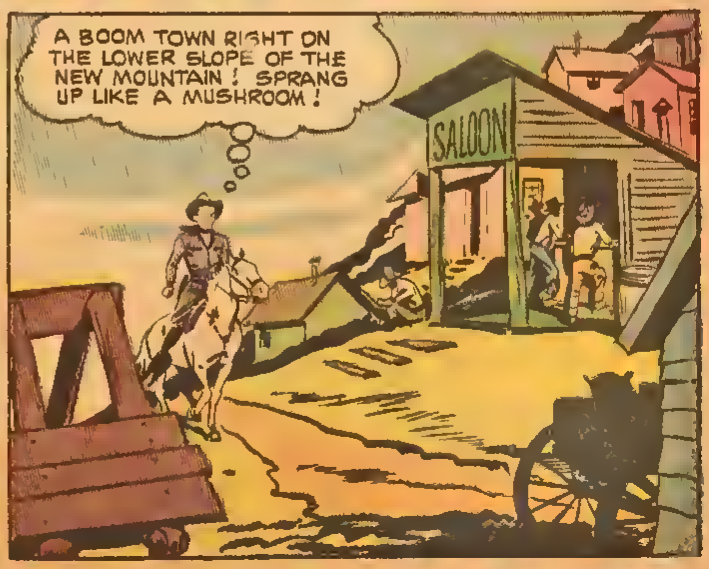

BUT HOW DID THIS GOLD RUSH START? I'LL CHECK IN TOWN----IF ANYBODY'S LEFT!
LONGHORN JUNCTION


KEN HEARS THE STORY FROM PROFESSOR WEERD!
I WAS EXAMINING VOLCANIC ROCK FROM THE ERUPTION AND NOTICED GOLD FLECKS IN THEM! SO THE MOUNTAIN ITSELF MUST BE LOADED WITH GOLD!
NO WONDER MOLTEN GOLD FLOWED TO WAYNE'S RANCH!

AND NOBODY OWNS THE LAND WHERE THE MOUNTAIN GREW?
NO! IT WAS WILD SCRUBLAND AND NOBODY EVER WANTED IT! SO THE GOLD IS FREE FOR THE TAKING! THAT'S WHAT STARTED OFF THE RUSH!

THIS BEATS ALL! NOT ONLY DOES A BRAND NEW MOUNTAIN POP OUT OF NOWHERE, BUT IT TURNS OUT TO BE LOADED WITH GOLD, STARTING OFF A GOLD RUSH! I SUPPOSE NEXT THERE'LL BE A BOOM TOWN AT THE MOUNTAIN!


KEN MAYNARD IS NOT WRONG, AND A FEW DAYS LATER---
BANG! BANG! BANG
BANG! BANG!

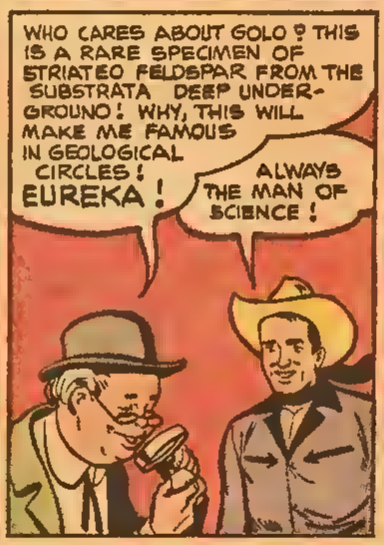

A BOOM TOWN RIGHT ON THE LOWER SLOPE OF THE NEW MOUNTAIN! SPRANG UP LIKE A MUSHROOM!
SALOON

BUT I'M STILL SEARCHING FOR POLECAT POLTON---FOR THE THIRD TIME! HE MIGHT BE DIGGING GOLD HIMSELF!

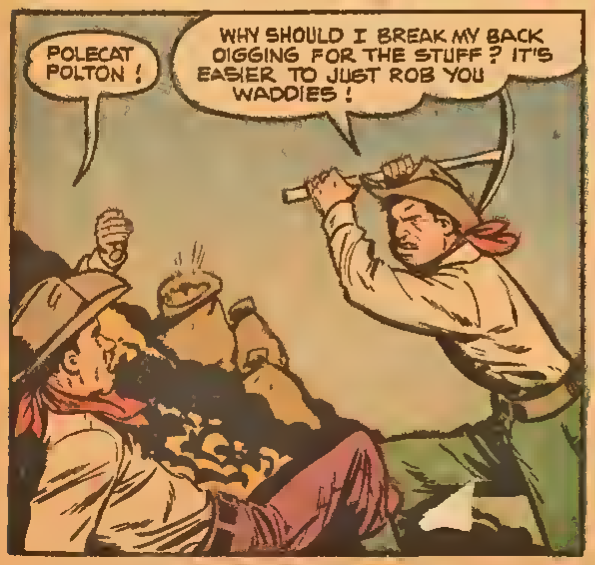
EVERYBODY'S STRIKING IT RICH! THE WHOLE MOUNTAIN IS A BONANZA!

EUREKA!
THAT SOUNDS LIKE THE PROFESSOR!

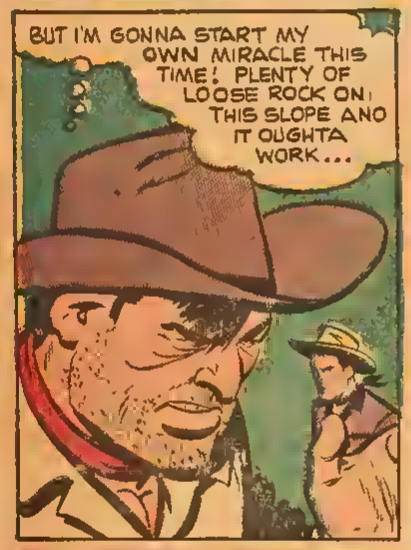
PROFESSOR---YOU, TOO? THE GOLD FEVER GOT YOU, EH?
GOLD?


WHO CARES ABOUT GOLD? THIS IS A RARE SPECIMEN OF STRIATED FELDSPAR FROM THE SUBSTRATA DEEP UNDER-GROUND! WHY, THIS WILL MAKE ME FAMOUS IN GEOLOGICAL CIRCLES! EUREKA!
ALWAYS THE MAN OF SCIENCE!

BUT JUST THEN ANOTHER KIND OF YELL IS HEARD AND KEN RIDES TO INVESTIGATE!
HELP! HELP!


POLECAT POLTON!
WHY SHOULD I BREAK MY BACK DIGGING FOR THE STUFF? IT'S EASIER TO JUST ROB YOU WADDIES!

WE MEET AGAIN, POLECAT POLTON!
MAYNARD!



WITH A THUNDEROUS ROAR, THE AVALANCHE GRINDS DOWN THE LONG SLOPE, CARRYING THE WESTERN HERO WITH IT ! ONCE AGAIN HE FACES DEATH ! WHAT HOPE IS THERE ? READ ON FOR CHAPTER III OF THE MIGHTY MOUNTAIN MENACE !

KEN MAYNARD

COWARD'S COURAGE

By Bob Laughlin

IT WAS nearing midnight in the smoke-laden Half-Moon Casino, and a familiar foursome was grouped around a table, exchanging big and small talk. There was Kit Melville, big, rugged and tousle-haired, foreman of the Lazy Y; Captain Marion Kezar, retired Army officer who regaled with his tales of many places; Jack Whittle, a local cattle rancher who had made good at an early age; and Mike Walsh, a cowpoke and buddy of Melville. They had become more or less a regular foursome on Saturday nights at the Half-Moon.

"My friends," said Captain Kezar at length, "you probably believe there are only two extremes—either a man is a coward, or he is a hero, and that the coward is always a coward and the hero always brave."

"So it is," replied Kit Melville.

"There is no middle-ground," agreed the cattleman.

"But it is not so," declared Kezar. "Courage is a very complex quality, and very difficult to define. There are many kinds of courage, and courage varies according to times and circumstances."

"I still say," emphasized the Lazy Y foreman, " an hombre is yellow or he's not." His companions nodded.

"Let me relate to you a case in point," smiled the ex-military man, "and you may draw your own conclusions."

This proposal was heartily accepted by the three, who were at all times more than content to listen to the old captain's tales, in the meantime drinking and trying to catch him up.

"It was in July of 1846 during the Mexican War," recalled Kezar, "and I was serving as a lieutenant in the national guards under Colonel Blakely. We were holed up near the Rio Grande, awaiting reinforcements, and the Mexicans were beseiging our stronghold, pouring into it a hail of bombs and grenades.

"One night when we feared that the enemy was going to make an attempt to storm the fortress under the cover of the darkness, I was ordered to select four men to do advance sentry duty. I chose those who appeared best fitted for the task, four handsome, strong and intelligent young fellows. I assigned a post and gave instructions to each one.

" 'You, Corporal Flint,' I said to one of them, a veritable athlete, 'will take your station in the cemetery.'

"The men all saluted and filed off with the exception of Flint.

" 'What are you waiting for, Flint?' I asked him.

" 'Lieutenant,' he responded, 'with your permission, I shall not undertake this service.'

"Although I was only a raw national guardsman, I felt highly indignant at this breach of discipline. Nevertheless, not wishing to act hastily, and to give the man a chance to right himself, I said, 'What is this you are saying to me?'

" 'That I beg you, Lieutenant, to relieve me from this service.'

" 'You will instantly obey the order given you!' I exclaimed angrily.

" 'Lieutenant, I humbly and respectfully beg you to excuse me,' insisted Flint.

" 'If you fail to obey,' I said with finality, 'you will be shot!'

" 'Let them shoot me then, Lieutenant.'

"The whole company had witnessed this act of insubordination and disobedience in the face of the enemy. My military prestige, the whole fabric of military discipline was in jeopardy. Still, I controlled myself sufficiently to say to Corporal Flint, 'Why do you refuse to obey?'

" 'Because I am afraid, Lieutenant.'

This brought gleeful snickers to the captain's audience.

"Yellow from top to toe," opined Mike Walsh.

With another round poured, Captain Kezar continued:

" 'What!' I cried in astonishment. 'A big fellow like you, a corporal in the company of grenadiers, dares to confess before his comrades that he is a coward!'

" 'Excuse me, Lieutenant,' Flint replied quickly, 'I didn't say I was a coward. I said that I was afraid.'

" 'That is the same thing!' I retorted.

To which Flint replied, 'Excuse me, Lieutenant, but it is a very different thing. A coward is one who is always afraid and can never control his fear. I am only afraid at night and of ghosts. Now it is night and you order me to do sentry duty in a cemetery, and I would rather have a bullet put into me than die of

terror, since the first is the easier death!'

"I was about to resort to extreme measures, when the sentry cried out, 'Salute the commander—Colonel Blakely!'

"The soldiers ran to take their muskets and fell into line. Colonel Blakely had indeed entered the camp witb his staff. After his usual friendly greeting he asked me: 'Is there any news?'

"I told him that Corporal Flint had just refused to obey orders.

"'Well, well!' exclaimed Blakely, smiling and shaking his head. 'Let me see. Where is this Corporal Flint?'

"'Present, Colonel,' replied the man, stepping forward.

"'So, my son, you are the culprit. Come closer. Now, what is the matter?'

"'Colonel,' answered Flint, 'the matter is that they have chosen me to do sentry duty at night in a cemetery and I have respectfully begged to be relieved of this duty because I am afraid of ghosts.'

"'You do well to confess it, my son,' replied Colonel Blakely, 'and I admire the true bravery you have shown!'

"On hearing these unexpected words, we were all staggered. The Colonel noted this and saw that he must explain his meaning.

"'Yes, my boys,' he said, 'courage is needed, great courage, to speak as Flint has just spoken, and we owe him thanks for so doing. Now suppose that be had not been brave enough and loyal enough to confess his fear. He would then have pretended to accept the duty, would have gone outside the fortress, and, instead of making his way to the proper point, would have merely gone a few steps beyond the wall and then hidden bimself in some place where he would have been quite safe from discovery. In the meantime, trusting to his vigilance, we would bave been at the mercy of a surprise. You are excused, my son. If you cannot serve us at night in a cemetery, you will go good service in some other place and at some other time. Let any one of the company who is willing to volunteer for the service in the cemetery step out of the ranks.'

"Tbe whole company of grenadiers advanced as one man.

"'You may go, Corporal Martin,' said Blakely, who knew every one of tbe battalion by name. 'You may go, and good luck be with you. The only order I give you is, don't get tipsy.'

"'I swear to you, Colonel, that I shall not taste even one little drop,' responded Martin as he departed."

At this Kit Melville guffawed and cattleman Whittle remarked, "Well, that doesn't go for us," whereupon he filled the glasses to brimming once more. Captain Kezar then continued:

"To speak plainly, gents, neither I nor anyone else in the company had been convinced by the Colonel's justification of Flint's conduct, and we all denounced the latter unmercifully as be went off.

"Well, sir, the following day was one on which the Mexicans pounded us unceasingly, but we had become so used to the bombs and grenades that we paid little attention to them.

"The grenadiers were quietly eating their rations while the gunners were firing off the eight-pounders regularly.

"Suddenly a bomb plunged right down into our midst, partly embedding itself in the ground. The boys all threw themselves down on their faces. The projectile whirled around in the hole it had dug out, hissing and sputtering as though it were some live and fearsome thing.

"I remained standing, not through bravado, but because I felt as though rooted to the spot, for I noted some powder barrels near us which the gunners had been using. I grasped the imminent danger we were in of being blown to boot hill and back, and I was *overcome by fear!*

"YES, I was afraid, horribly afraid, in the daytime, in a fortified enclosure where there were no dead men but many living ones. I experienced one of those nightmare terrors that paralyze us, deadening even the instinct of self-preservation so that we cannot even fly from the danger.

"It is true that this lasted only a moment, tbe time of a lightning flash.

"All at once I saw a man of athletic build spring up, approach the bomb, seize it, carry it in his bands to the parapet, and drop it outside into the ditch.

"Then we heard a frightful explosion. There was a moment of silence and amazement. The first shock over, we touched ourselves to make sure we were still alive and unburt. Then our eyes turned to tbe man who had so heroically saved us. We saw him sitting on a gun-carriage quietly eating his rations, as though notbing out of tbe ordinary bad happened.

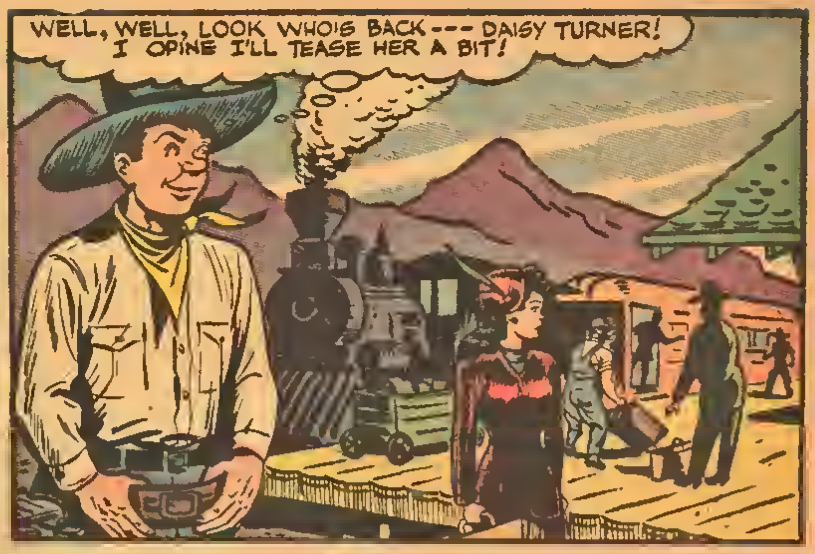
"That man was Corporal Flint, the soldier who was afraid of ghosts.

"So you see, gentlemen, courage is a very queer thing."

THE END

SASSY SAM

HEY, COOKIE!



KEN MAYNARD and THE MIGHTY MOUNTAIN MENACE!

CHAPTER THREE
SUBTERRANEAN TRAP

WHINNYYYY!

(GASP!) NO, TARZAN, OLD BOY! YOU CAN'T SAVE ME! DON'T GET CAUGHT IN THIS YOURSELF! AWAY, TARZAN!

AVALANCHE! WITH TITANIC POWER IT DRAGS KEN MAYNARD ALONG, GAINING IN MOMENTUM EACH SECOND! NO MAN HAS EVER ESCAPED SUCH RAGING FURY!

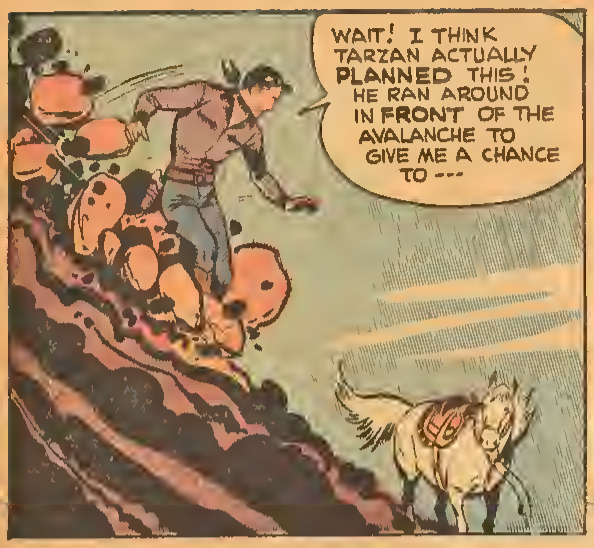
FOR A MOMENT THE GREAT HORSE OBEYS, WATCHING IN AGONY AS HIS BELOVED MASTER IS CARRIED TOWARD DOOM!

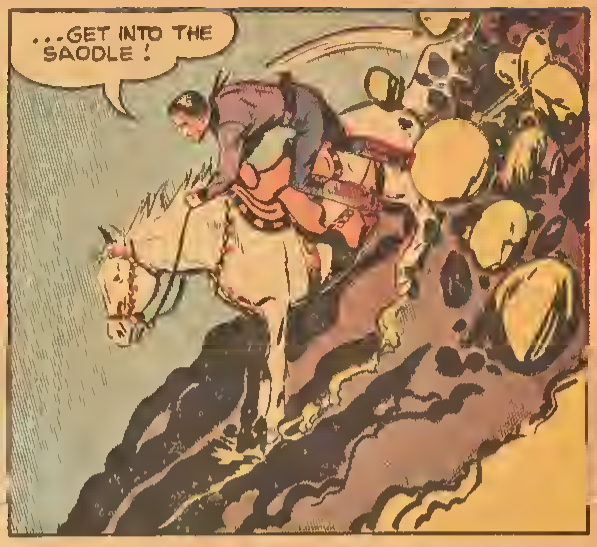
WHINNYYYY!

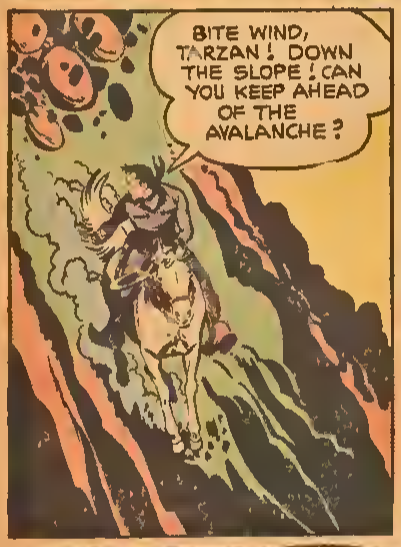
BUT THEN, FOR ONCE, TARZAN DISOBEYS A COMMAND!

IS TARZAN SEEKING DEATH ALONG WITH HIS MASTER? OR IS THERE A PLAN WORKING IN THE INTELLIGENT HORSE'S MIND?

TARZAN, YOU'LL BE KILLED, TOO! YOU'LL DIE WITH ME...

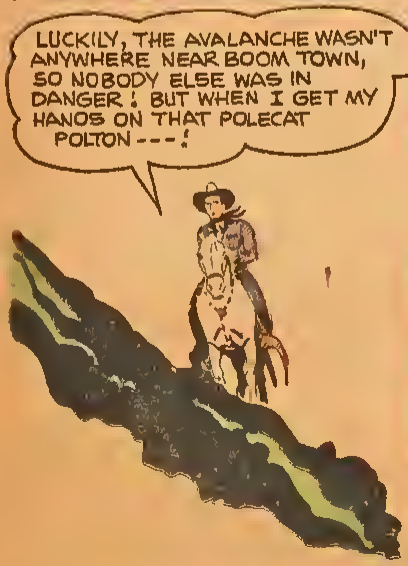

WAIT! I THINK TARZAN ACTUALLY PLANNED THIS! HE RAN AROUND IN FRONT OF THE AVALANCHE TO GIVE ME A CHANCE TO ---

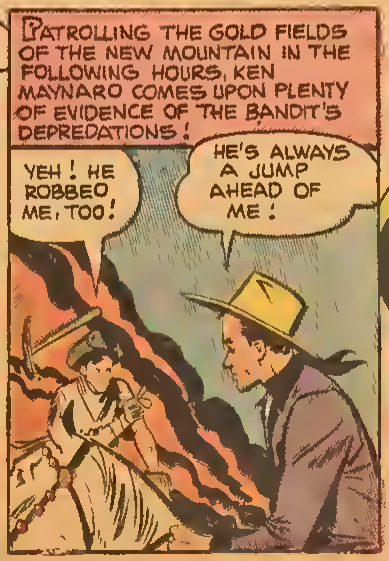

...GET INTO THE SADDLE!


BITE WIND, TARZAN! DOWN THE SLOPE! CAN YOU KEEP AHEAD OF THE AVALANCHE?

YOU DID IT, TARZAN! YOU'RE LEAVING THE AVALANCHE BEHIND LIKE AN OLD PLOW-HORSE! NOW TURN AND WE CAN GET OUT OF ITS PATH ENTIRELY!

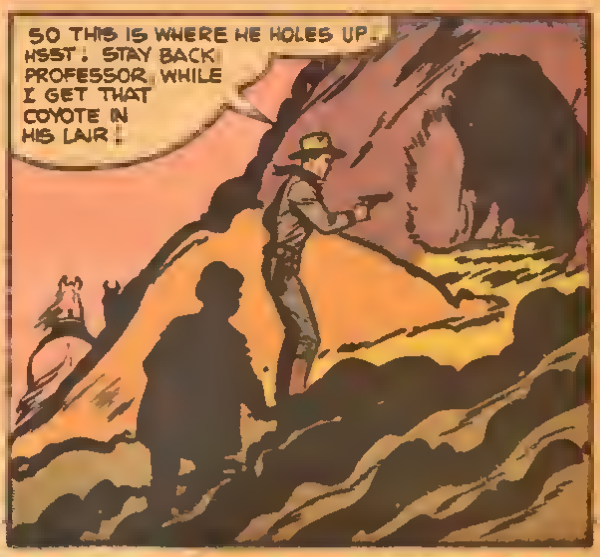
ONCE AGAIN, THE GREATEST HORSE IN THE WEST HAS PROVED HIMSELF MATCHLESS IN SPEED AND POWER, DEFYING AND OUTRUNNING A MIGHTY AVALANCHE!
TALK ABOUT MIRACLES! TARZAN OLD PARD, YOU'RE A MIRACLE ON FOUR LEGS!


LUCKILY, THE AVALANCHE WASN'T ANYWHERE NEAR BOOM TOWN, SO NOBODY ELSE WAS IN DANGER! BUT WHEN I GET MY HANDS ON THAT POLECAT POLTON ---!


PATROLLING THE GOLD FIELDS OF THE NEW MOUNTAIN IN THE FOLLOWING HOURS, KEN MAYNARD COMES UPON PLENTY OF EVIDENCE OF THE BANDIT'S DEPREDATIONS!
YEH! HE ROBBED ME, TOO!
HE'S ALWAYS A JUMP AHEAD OF ME!

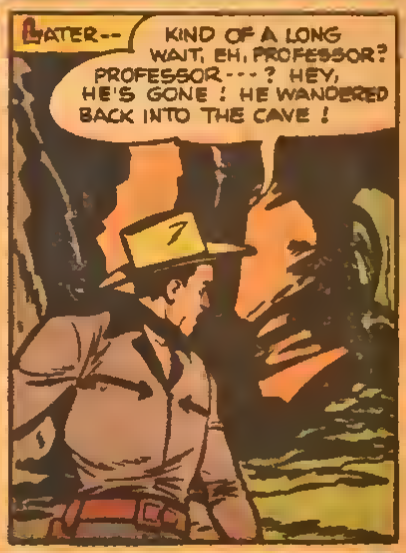
BUT WHERE DOES HE HIDE HIS LOOT! HE'S PILING UP QUITE A BIT OF IT!

HOWDY, PROFESSOR! WHAT'S UP?
KEN! I OBSERVED THAT OUTLAW SNEAKING TO A SORT OF CAVE OR MOUNTAIN CREVICE OVER THERE! I'LL LEAD YOU TO IT!

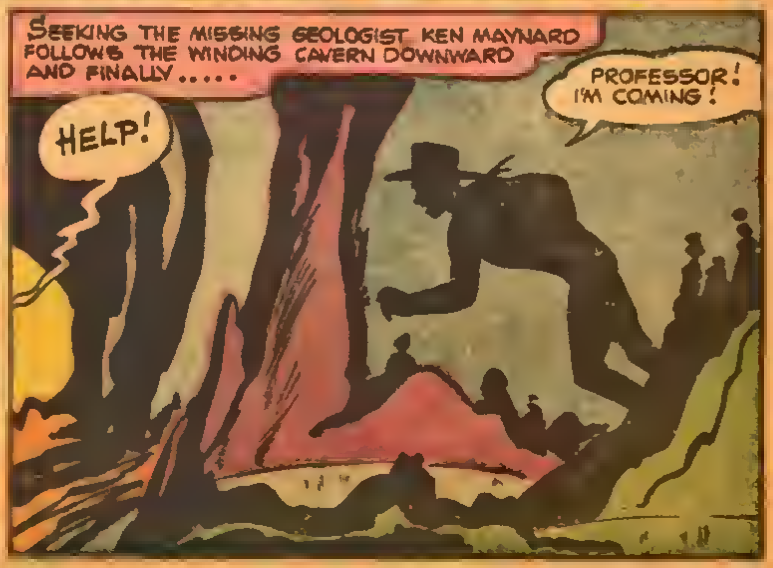

SO THIS IS WHERE HE HOLES UP. HSST! STAY BACK PROFESSOR, WHILE I GET THAT COYOTE IN HIS LAIR!

HE'S NOT HERE! ONLY HIS STOLEN LOOT!
HMM! WHAT AN INTERESTING CAVERN!

I'LL WAIT FOR HIM! WHAT A SURPRISE FOR POLECAT POLTON! HE THINKS THE AVALANCHE FINISHED ME OFF!
HMMM! HMMM! HMMMMMMM! MORE FASCINATING THE FURTHER I GO!

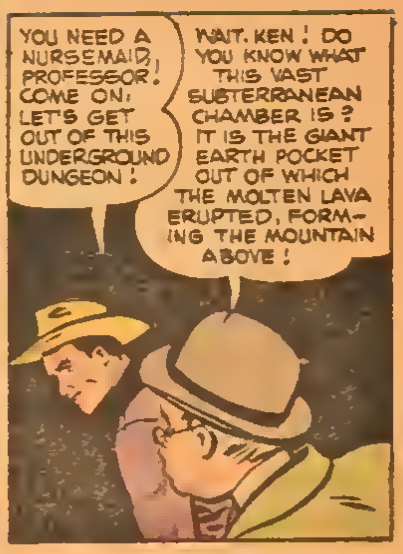

LATER--
KIND OF A LONG WAIT, EH, PROFESSOR? PROFESSOR---? HEY, HE'S GONE! HE WANDERED BACK INTO THE CAVE!

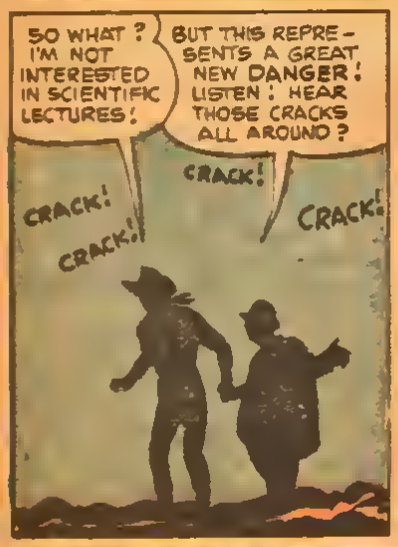
PROFESSOR! PROFESSOR! HOW FAR DID HE GO? THIS CAVE LOOKS ENDLESS! IF HE WANDERS TOO FAR, HE MIGHT GET LOST!

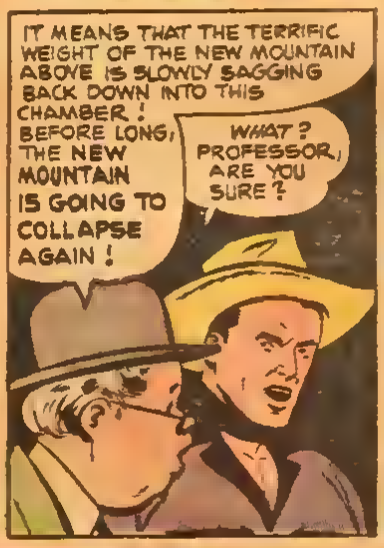

SEEKING THE MISSING GEOLOGIST KEN MAYNARD FOLLOWS THE WINDING CAVERN DOWNWARD AND FINALLY.....
HELP!
PROFESSOR! I'M COMING!

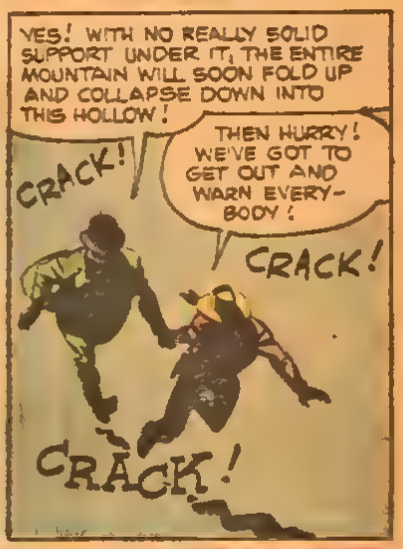
I WAS BUSY LOOKING AROUND AND FAILED TO SEE THIS PIT!
SIZZLING SASSAFRAS! BEFORE YOUR COAT RIPS APART...

GOT YOU!


YOU NEED A NURSEMAID, PROFESSOR! COME ON; LET'S GET OUT OF THIS UNDERGROUND DUNGEON!
WAIT, KEN! DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS VAST SUBTERRANEAN CHAMBER IS? IT IS THE GIANT EARTH POCKET OUT OF WHICH THE MOLTEN LAVA ERUPTED, FORMING THE MOUNTAIN ABOVE!

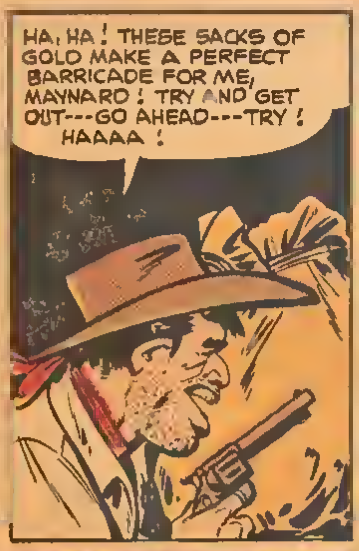

SO WHAT? I'M NOT INTERESTED IN SCIENTIFIC LECTURES!
BUT THIS REPRESENTS A GREAT NEW DANGER! LISTEN! HEAR THOSE CRACKS ALL AROUND?
CRACK!
CRACK!
CRACK!
CRACK!


IT MEANS THAT THE TERRIFIC WEIGHT OF THE NEW MOUNTAIN ABOVE IS SLOWLY SAGGING BACK DOWN INTO THIS CHAMBER! BEFORE LONG, THE NEW MOUNTAIN IS GOING TO COLLAPSE AGAIN!
WHAT? PROFESSOR, ARE YOU SURE?


YES! WITH NO REALLY SOLID SUPPORT UNDER IT, THE ENTIRE MOUNTAIN WILL SOON FOLD UP AND COLLAPSE DOWN INTO THIS HOLLOW!
THEN HURRY! WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT AND WARN EVERYBODY!
CRACK!
CRACK!
CRACK!

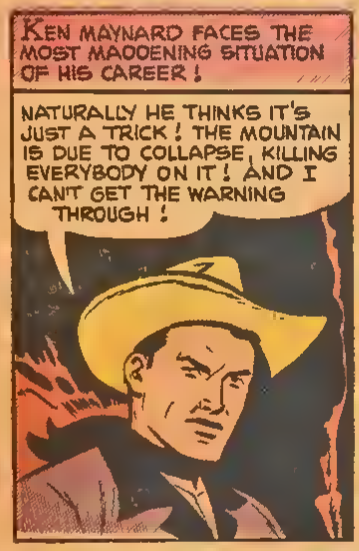
BUT WHEN THEY REACH THE CAVE EXIT---
POLECAT POLTON IS HERE NOW!
WHO'S THAT? KEN MAYNARD! DIDN'T THE AVALANCHE GET YOU?

BUT I'VE GOT YOU TRAPPED NOW! YOU CAN'T GET OUT PAST ME!
JUMP, PROFESSOR... INTO SHADOWS!
BANG!
BANG!


HA, HA! THESE SACKS OF GOLD MAKE A PERFECT BARRICADE FOR ME, MAYNARD! TRY AND GET OUT---GO AHEAD---TRY! HAAAA!

GREAT HEAVENS! THIS IS NOT ONLY A TRAP FOR US, BUT FOR ALL THE GOLD DIGGERS ON THE MOUNTAIN! HOW CAN WE GET OUT TO WARN THEM?
I'LL TELL POLECAT THE TRUTH! HE'S GOT TO LET US THROUGH!

POLECAT! LISTEN! THE WHOLE MOUNTAIN IS GOING TO COLLAPSE! LET US THROUGH TO WARN EVERYBODY!
NOW AIN'T THAT A PRETTY LITTLE STORY, MAYNARD! DO YOU THINK I CAN BE FOOLED LIKE A BABY WITH THAT FAIRY TALE? PARDON MY LAUGH! HAW, HAW!


KEN MAYNARD FACES THE MOST MADDENING SITUATION OF HIS CAREER!
NATURALLY HE THINKS IT'S JUST A TRICK! THE MOUNTAIN IS DUE TO COLLAPSE, KILLING EVERYBODY ON IT! AND I CAN'T GET THE WARNING THROUGH!

BUT I'VE GOT TO TRY! HERE GOES, PROFESSOR!
YOU'LL BE SHOT DOWN LIKE A DOG, KEN! IT'S HOPELESS!

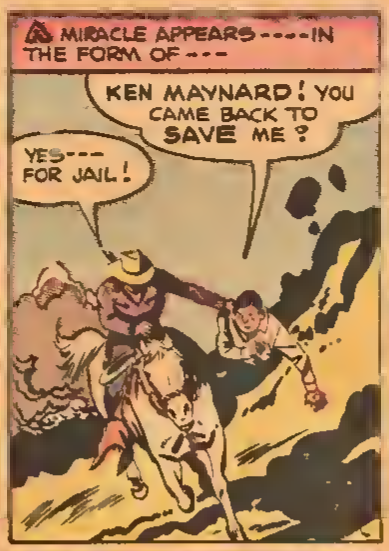
HAAA! COME AND GET IT, MAYNARD! I'VE GOT YOU IN MY SIGHTS NOW...!
BANG!

ONLY ONE HOPE!...TO HIT THAT ROCK ABOVE HIM! IF IT LOOSENS AND DROPS....
BANG!

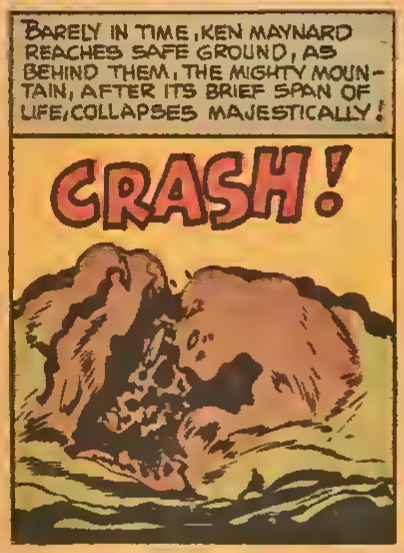
THUD!
UGGG!
IT WORKED!

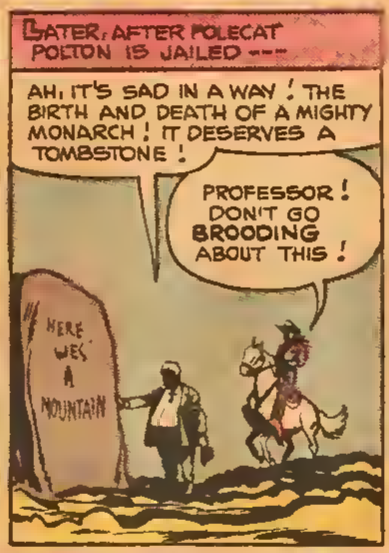
LET'S GO, PROFESSOR! YOU WARN THEM IN BOOM TOWN! I'LL WARN ALL THE GOLD DIGGERS!
ATTENTION ALL!! CLEAR OUT! THE NEW MOUNTAIN IS GOING TO COLLAPSE AGAIN!
OMIGOSH! BUT THE PROFESSOR'S NEVER WRONG! OUT OF TOWN, EVERYBODY!
AND ONCE MORE, A MASS EXODUS TAKES PLACE!
NOBODY LEFT BEHIND! ALL'S WELL!
BUT KEN MAYNARD DOES NOT HAVE THAT EASY A JOB OF IT, FOR HE IS DEALING WITH MEN HALF-MADDENED BY THE LURE OF GOLDEN WEALTH!
DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME, MISTER? SAVE YOURSELF BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
GOLD! GOLD! DON'T BOTHER ME!
SORRY, PARD, BUT THIS IS NECESSARY! GOT TO SAVE YOU IN SPITE OF YOURSELF!
BAM!
HURRY, FOLKS! AND TAKE THIS POOR FELLOW ALONG!
BUT FINALLY, THE GREAT JOB IS DONE, AND ---
EVERYBODY ACCOUNTED FOR! THAT CLEARS OFF THE MOUNTAIN OF ALL PEOPLE! LET IT COLLAPSE!
CRACK
BUT THERE IS ONE SOUL LEFT ON THE DOOMED MOUNTAIN---POLECAT POLTON!
HELP! THE MOUNTAIN IS REALLY CRACKING UP! WHY DIDN'T I BELIEVE KEN MAYNARD? I'M SUNK AND MY HORSE RAN AWAY IN FRIGHT!

WHAT GOOD IS THIS GOLD NOW? THE MOUNTAIN IS CRACKING UP! ONLY A MIRACLE COULD SAVE ME!


A MIRACLE APPEARS----IN THE FORM OF---
KEN MAYNARD! YOU CAME BACK TO SAVE ME?
YES--- FOR JAIL!

BESIDES, I COULDN'T LET EVEN A LOWDOWN SIDEWINDER LIKE YOU DIE THAT HORRIBLY---BURIED IN A COLLAPSING MOUNTAIN!


BARELY IN TIME, KEN MAYNARD REACHES SAFE GROUND, AS BEHIND THEM, THE MIGHTY MOUNTAIN, AFTER ITS BRIEF SPAN OF LIFE, COLLAPSES MAJESTICALLY!
CRASH!


LATER, AFTER POLECAT POLTON IS JAILED---
AH, IT'S SAD IN A WAY! THE BIRTH AND DEATH OF A MIGHTY MONARCH! IT DESERVES A TOMBSTONE!
PROFESSOR! DON'T GO BROODING ABOUT THIS!
HERE WES A MOUNTAIN

EUREKA!
NOW WHAT, PROFESSOR?

A RARE SPECIMEN OF FOSSILIZED MICA! WHAT A FIND!

EUREKA! EUREKA!
THE PROFESSOR'S ALL RIGHT! LET'S GO! BITE WIND, TARZAN!

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